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To A C Campbell Esq

Yours faithfully
W. H. Williams

MANTOBA
AND
THE NORTH-WEST;

JOURNAL OF A TRIP

FROM

TORONTO TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS,

VIA

LAKE SUPERIOR, THUNDER BAY, RAT PORTAGE, WIN-
NIPEG, QU'APPELLE, PRINCE ALBERT, BATTLE-
FORD, FORT CALGARY AND FORT McLEOD.

AND RETURN VIA

EDMONTON, TOUCHWOOD HILLS, ETC.

BY

W. H. WILLIAMS,

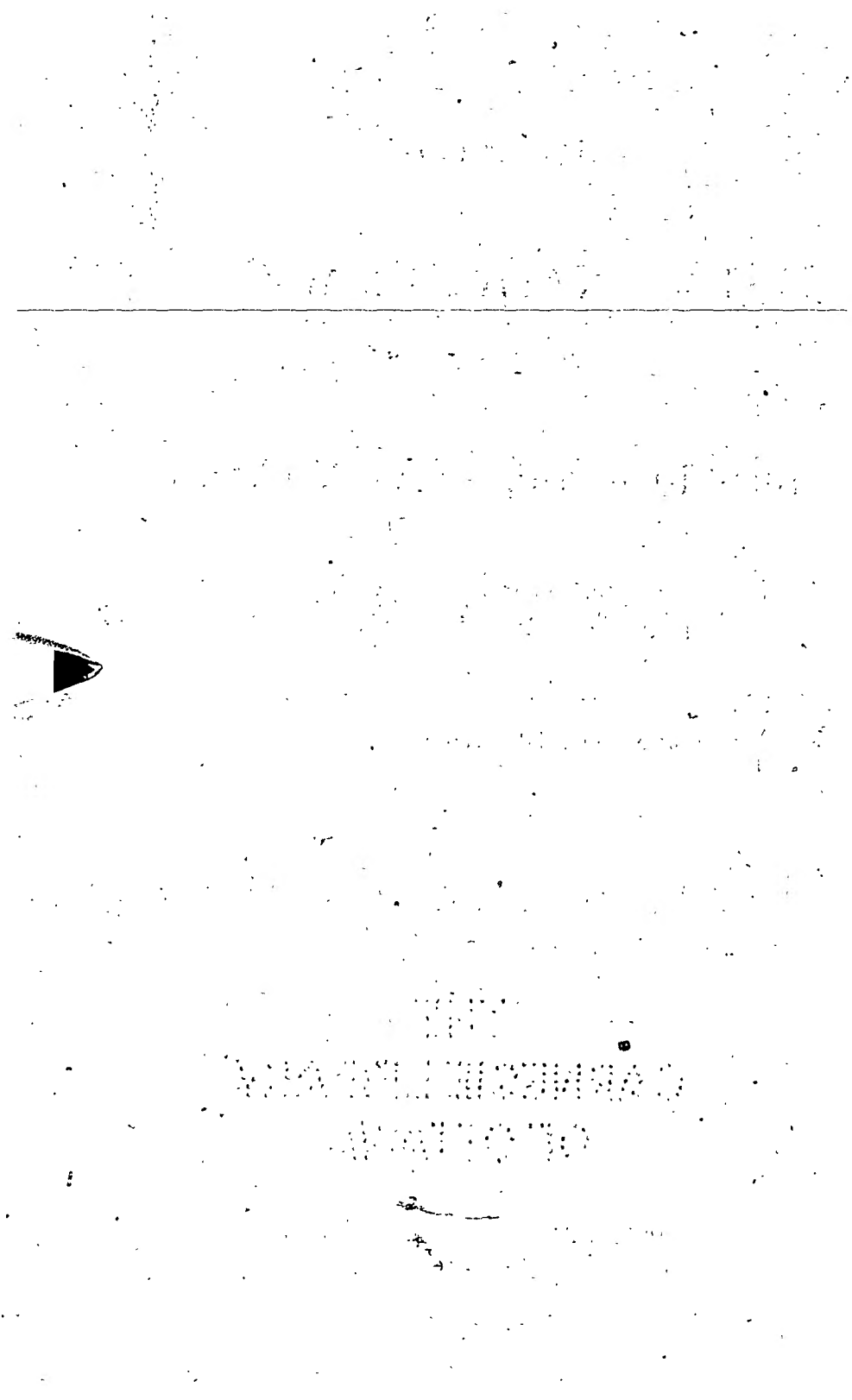
Special Correspondent of Toronto Globe with Lord Lorne.

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INTRODUCTION.

IN presenting my North-West letters to the public in their present form, I do not feel that any apology is necessary. Much has already been published about the North-West Territory, but it must be remembered, that as yet, very little is known concerning it. This is not the fault of those few who have travelled through the country, as indeed some extremely useful and entertaining books are already comprised in our library of North-Western literature; but it is rather the fault of the country itself. It is simply "too big" for the amount of research that has as yet been expended upon it, and hundreds of large quarto volumes would come very far short of containing all that might be written of the great North-West that would be both entertaining and instructive. Much of the country is as yet practically unknown to all save a few aboriginies, and though the tide of immigration has been pouring in a heavy stream of population during the past few years, it has not yet amounted to a drop in the bucket. Travellers have taken one trail through the country on their westward course, and have, perhaps, returned east by another route, but even this has only opened up a very limited portion of this vast region to their investigation, so that, as I said at the outset, I do not think I owe the public any apology for adding one more book to the number that have already been written on the great North-West.

In the following pages the reader will find my letters in much the same form as that taken by them when they appeared in *The Globe*, except that matters of purely local or ephemeral interest have been expunged. To have presented them in any other form than that of a journal of my trip to the Rocky Mountains and back, would have meant either a sacrifice of continuity, or the elimination of much in the way of experiences, that I think cannot fail to be of practical use to the intending visitor, be he tourist or settler. In this journal the reader will find a faithful and accurate record of my experiences and impressions in crossing the great North-West, and I cannot but think that as such, they will be quite as instructive, and vastly more readable, than would

have been a book, in which, without the continuity of a story, I had attempted to teach the lessons impressed upon me by these experiences.

In conclusion I have only to say that while I have no doubt that this book will be fiercely attacked, bullied and criticized, by the enemies of the North-West on the one hand, and those who would have the public think that region an earthly realization of Paradise, on the other, I bear no ill feeling to those who thus hope to climb suddenly into literary pre-eminence over my "mangled remains," but I only ask the reading public to remember that I have enjoyed exceptional facilities for collecting reliable information regarding the country through which I travelled, and that I have no object in telling anything but the simple truth.

Whenever I have had occasion to deal with anything outside the limits of my personal observation, I have given my authority for my statements, and my aim throughout has been to be as accurate as possible. This disposition to be accurate, without regard to the pet theories of lecturers, preachers and writers, who have given the public a great deal of silly gush about the climate of the North-West, has already secured for me no small amount of abuse, as well as some little malicious vilification, but in spite of all this I cannot see any reason why I should tell falsehoods merely for the sake of being on the popular side. I have no lots to sell, nor am I paid to puff certain sections of country, and so I can afford to tell the truth; but on the other hand I should be very sorry if a single sentence in the following pages should deter any desirable immigrant from making a home in Manitoba or the North-West. It is only those idle visionary fools, that seek an earthly paradise, who would be frightened by the simple truths I have told regarding the climate of the North-West, and it is they who want gush with which to construct their day dreams.

Had I not made the journey in Lord Lorne's company, I could not possibly have had anything like such excellent opportunities for obtaining information from settlers, traders, half-breeds, and Indians, and I cannot sufficiently acknowledge the obligations I owe His Excellency for the care he invariably exercised in seeing that all the journalists in the party were furnished with every facility for collecting useful and interesting information.

The course taken was from Toronto to Collingwood via the Northern Railway, thence to Prince Arthur's Landing, per Steamer *Frances Smith*, thence by Canada Pacific Railway to Wabigoon Lake, thence by canoe

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route to Rat Portage, thence by Canada Pacific Railway to Winnipeg, Portage La Prairie and end of track, thence to Carleton by horses and waggons, thence to Prince Albert by Steamer *Northcote*, thence to Battleford by Steamer *Lily*, thence by horses and waggons to Calgary, Fort McLeod and Pincher Creek, where I bade good-bye to His Excellency and party, and returned home by way of Edmonton. The journey opened July 21st, and closed December 16th, 1881, and was probably as comprehensive, if not more so, than that taken by any letter writer who has recently visited the country.

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MANITOBA AND THE NORTH-WEST.

CHAPTER I.

LORD LORNE AND PARTY LEAVE TORONTO AND, CALLING AT SEVERAL INTERMEDIATE POINTS, REACH OWEN SOUND.

Barrie, July 21.—The special train carrying the Governor-General and party moved out of Brock Street station at just half-past eleven, having been preceded by the pilot engine just ten minutes earlier. The train consisted of an engine and six cars. First came the baggage car, then the Northern Railway staff car, then the parlour car, then the directors' car; and after that the two cars belonging to His Excellency and suite. The pilot selected for the occasion was No. 64, a new Brooks engine but recently imported. She was in charge of Engineer R. Person, one of the oldest drivers on the line, his connection with the line dating twenty-five years back. The engineer was also accompanied by Patrick Henrick, a conductor who has been in the service of the Company for twenty-seven years. The run out of the city and northward was a very pleasant one. There was so little dust that the windows and doors of the cars could be left open without any inconvenience to the passengers, and the rapid motion of the train kept a refreshing breeze passing through the cars all the time, thus keeping down the temperature to a most enjoyable condition. The almost cloudless sky, brilliant sunshine and the lonely pastoral landscapes, in which the rich, verdant lines of mid-summer were charmingly varied by the orange and yellow fields of ripe and ripening grain.

AT NEWMARKET.

The train reached Newmarket about one o'clock, where a large crowd had assembled, and the preparations for the reception of His Excellency were of the most complete and satisfactory character. A handsome pavilion of evergreens had been erected opposite the point at which the Governor's car stopped. Here the usual programme of addresses and replies were gone through with.

After leaving Newmarket the guests of the Company and the members of the Press were treated to an excellent lunch on board the train, and soon after this was over the train came in sight of the sparkling dark-blue waters of Kempenfeldt Bay with the town of Barrie nestling prettily along its farther

shore. At Allandale, His Excellency and party were entertained to an elegant lunch by the Northern Railway Company, after which the train made its way over to Barrie, the station being reached at about half-past three. Here a brilliant and enthusiastic reception awaited His Excellency. The long platform in front of and beside the station was literally packed with men, women, and children, all cheering enthusiastically as the train drew up.

After the inevitable addresses had been gone through with, the train left Barrie about half-past four, and the run to Collingwood was a rapid one through a flat level country, which, though only partially settled, promises extremely well as an agricultural district. The country, though low lying, has excellent soil, and the crops are magnificent. When the Prince of Wales went through here, and even as late as fifteen years ago, this country was an absolute wilderness, but now the landscape is dotted all over with fine clearings, with splendid homesteads springing up on every hand.

At Collingwood another brilliant reception awaited His Excellency, but in due time the whole party reached the wharf, and it was just eight o'clock as the final whistle was sounded, and the steamer *Frances Smith* swung out from the wharf and steamed gracefully out of Collingwood Harbour. The sun had gone down like a great disc of fire, flaring redly through a thick bank of dark blue mist, and soon the stars were shining brightly overhead, and the cool night breezes came stealing down from the north over the almost rippleless water.

Though it was ten o'clock when the steamer reached Meaford, a reception committee was in waiting, and an unusually enthusiastic welcome was accorded to His Excellency. After an address had been presented and replied to, His Excellency and party returned to the steamer, and the *Frances Smith* shortly afterwards started from the wharf on the next stage of the journey. The good people of Owen Sound were anxious to welcome His Excellency and give formal expression to their feelings of loyalty, but circumstances did not permit. The boat called at their port about four o'clock in the morning, an hour which precluded any interchange of courtesies.

CHAPTER II.

UP GEORGIAN BAY—A NOISY REVEILLE—LONELY ISLAND—ASHORE AT KILLARNEY AND
LITTLE CURRENT—A STRANGE COINCIDENCE—AN INTERESTING INCIDENT.

LITTLE CURRENT, Manitoulin Island, July 22nd.—Early this morning the passengers of the *Frances Smith* were aroused from their slumbers by a chorus of the most unearthly and discordant noises. A lot of fat cattle were being

taken on board, and as they had no special desire for a trip to the North-West they were giving expression to their disapproval with a vengeance.

It was nearly six o'clock when the heavily-laden steamer moved out of the excellent harbour of Owen Sound, and soon she was steaming up Georgian Bay favoured with as fine weather as was ever seen on a lovely mid-summer morning. For a great part of the forenoon the steamer was nearly or quite out of sight of land, but though there was little to be seen save sky and water, the passengers spent most of the time on the decks enjoying the light though deliciously cool and invigorating breezes from off the great northern waters.

Indeed, it would seem as if languor and weariness were impossibilities on the Lake Superior route, where every breath of air is a tonic, and the eye never wearies even when there is naught to be seen save the great stretches of water and the ever changing sky. In the afternoon the breeze had died away to a mere breath, and the steamer ploughed along through the apparently limitless expanse of limpid water, whose wondrous depth made it look like a swarthy flood. Low dead swells were rolling westward, but these were clothed in little wavelets whose tiny crests were flashing like diamonds of the purest water. Presently the black crest of Lonely Island looms out of the haze on the port bow, while its sides are still hidden by a thin veil of mist that is silver white at the water line, but shades upward to a translucent blue. Straight ahead in the horizon lies a bank of blue hazy clouds, and above this, but merging with it, are billowy masses of bright coppery clouds, whose upper edges are flecked with little ragged fragments of dark slaty rain clouds. Then comes a narrow zone of deep bright unclouded azure, and then broad thin sheets of fleecy sunlit vapour. Away to the southward all along the horizon lies a light belt of smoke brown haze, and in its upper edge are floating little fluffy cloudlets, gleaming sunlit isles of pale fawn colour. Lonely Island, whose dreary stretches of barren sand and gravel, and sullen towering ledges of rock repel all save the solitary lighthouse-keeper and now and then a few Ojibway fishermen, is passed at length, and then the great Manitoulin Island comes in view. Soon the steamer is under shelter of this greatest of all fresh water islands, but none too soon, for suddenly a great bank of rain cloud rolls down from the north-west, bringing with it a sharp squall that is quickly followed by a brisk shower, the big drops soon covering the dark waves with bubbles that look like myriads of tiny spheres of crystal against a back ground of inky blackness. The rain soon passes, however, and when the sun was only about an hour high the steamer turned westward into a long narrow reach between a low lying rocky island and the north shore mainland. On the right hand of this narrow channel lay the little fishing hamlet called Killarney. As the steamer passed the lighthouse and headed westward the declining sun lit up the gently rippling waters of the strait like a gleaming path of burnished gold. On the right, upon a broad glassy flat, edged with a low convex border of ice-polished reddish Laurentian rock curving down to the water's edge were scattered the wooden huts and cabins of the little fishing-village, while on the left the smooth, bare, storm-swept rocks were crowned

with the sharp, bristling, black-green cones of stunted spruces. Here the steamer halted for an hour, while His Excellency went ashore for a stroll through the village. The Marquis of Lorne was attracted by the very neat and cheerful appearance of a little house, the home of an old Scotchwoman, and entering, was warmly welcomed by the venerable occupant. It is a singular coincidence that this was the first house in Killarney entered by Lord Dufferin on the occasion of his trip up the lakes seven years ago. His Excellency called on one or two more of the residents, and finally visited a church bazaar, where he and his suite made several purchases. It was nearly dark when the steamer moved on up the strait toward Little Current, a small village on the Manitoulin side, and it was quite dark when the landing was made. On landing His Excellency and party were escorted up from the wharf and under a beautiful arch of evergreens to a dais canopied with spruce boughs and lighted with lanterns, where, in the presence of an immense crowd of whites and Indians, the addresses and replies were delivered.

After these had been finished, His Excellency expressed a desire to see one of the churches and visit some of the wigwams. The whole party, comprising His Excellency and most of the suite, the Reception Committee, a large number of the steamer's passengers, and a long procession of the villagers, comprising men, women, and children, white and red, started off for a walk of something like three-quarters of a mile, for after the little church had been visited the whole party made their way to chief Nahgahboh's wigwam. The walk was over a very rough, rocky road leading along a bluff not far from the shore, and finally down the face of a steep, rocky ridge to a low flat by the water, where several wigwams beside the chief's were standing, with here and there the remains of a camp fire smouldering among them. The face of the ridge already described was covered with a thick growth of stunted shrubs, as well as many pieces of loose rock, so that while His Excellency, with Dr. McGregor leaning on his arm, made his way down by the light of two or three lanterns, without any mishaps; a great many of those following in the pitchy darkness did not fare quite so well. In that motley procession were white men, women, children, Indians, squaws with papooses strapped upon their backs, or following on foot members of the suite, and other passengers, and as they went tumbling over each other as they scrambled down that steep, furze-covered incline, some of the most amusing scenes were of frequent occurrence. Occasionally one would make a misstep and pitch headlong into the very much mixed society below him, and then would come a succession of tumbles till a large section of the procession would find itself converted into a miniature human avalanche rolling down and carrying everything before it, until men and women, young and old, white and red, became mixed up in a most inextricable tangle, equally destructive to good clothes and dignified mien. At length after His Excellency had received some trifling presents from the three chiefs and their wives; after he had returned their kindnesses by presents of barrels of pork and flour; after he had shaken hands and spoken a few kind words to the squaws—young and old—whom he could reach in the darkfaced throng that pressed around him; and after Dr. Mc-

Gregor had pressed many a dark-brown hand with a fervent "God bless you," the visitors hurried away to the steamer. On the way, however, a little incident occurred well calculated to illustrate His Excellency's thorough but unostentatious kindness towards even the lowliest. He was hurrying along towards the boat through the darkness, and just as he had passed a wigwam two or three squaws came out with trifling presents, but they were not inclined to push their way into the crowd, and His Excellency did not see them. When he was 150 yards further on his way some one who had seen the women mentioned the circumstance. Without a moment's hesitation he wheeled about and started back, but before he reached the wigwam the squaws seeing the lanterns returning, hurried out to meet him bringing their presents with them. His Excellency accepted their presents and after shaking hands with them, said to the interpreter, "Tell them that in hurrying past through the darkness I was unable to see them, otherwise I should have stopped at once. Tell them I am very grateful for their kindness."

CHAPTER III.

MANITOULIN ISLAND AND ITS PRINCIPAL PRODUCTS—NEEBISH RAPIDS—LAKE GEORGE—THE SUNKEN "ASIA"—THE SAULT—GARDEN RIVER—SOME INDIAN CHIEFS AND THEIR ATTIRE—MICHIPCOTEN ISLAND—SILVER ISLET—PRINCE ARTHUR'S LANDING AND THE RECEPTION.

MANITOULIN ISLAND.

While ashore at Little Current I had an opportunity of gathering a few facts regarding the island in fresh water, the great Manitoulin. This island, as nearly everybody knows, is about one hundred miles long, and in places from twenty-five to thirty miles wide. It is of an irregular triangular shape, the base of the triangle, which lies towards the east, being nearly cut off by Manitouwaning Bay, a long, narrow arm of the lake jutting in from the northward. This strip of land is some eight miles wide from east to west, and it constitutes one of the Indian reserves of the island. A large proportion of this reserve is said to be very fertile. The island is made up of clay, sand, and rock, and though much of the arable land is somewhat stony its producing capabilities are surprising. The wheat raised here is of such an excellent quality that a comparatively large amount of it is annually exported for seed to the older portions of the Province. Last year it is asserted that some six or seven thousand bushels of wheat were exported, but this is far from being anything like a measure of its wheat producing capabilities, as a very large proportion of the arable land is still uncleared. A gentleman

perfectly well acquainted with the character of the interior informed me that from what he had seen it was pretty safe to estimate that from thirty to forty per cent. of the total area of the Island was made up of tillable land. The white population is variously estimated at from 9,000 to 10,000, and the Indian population at from 2,000 to 2,500. At present, though the country is admirably adapted to dairying and cattle raising, most of the beef and butter produced are consumed by the resident population and the large gangs of lumbermen annually employed here. The Indians farm and garden in a rude sort of way, make mats, baskets and other trifles of rushes, sweet grass, bark, and porcupine quills. They also fish, hunt, and trap, but these latter branches of industry are not carried on as successfully as in former days. The Indians also make large quantities of maple sugar every spring. The climate is said to be delightfully pleasant. The close proximity of such large bodies of water has the effect of tempering the fierce heat of midsummer and of rendering the winters quite as mild as those experienced along the north shore of Lake Ontario.

A fair quality of pine is to be found in considerable quantities on some portions of the island, while the export of cedar ties and telegraph poles to Chicago and Detroit has grown into an important branch of trade. The settlers are of opinion, however, that the timber on the island should be reserved for home consumption, as it will all be needed for that purpose as soon as the island shall have become fairly populated.

So far but little is known of the mineral resources of Manitoulin, but petroleum is said to have been found in one locality, while the mineral springs of at least two different sections promise in the future to make them popular resorts for invalids.

PHYSICAL FEATURES.

Manitou Lake, which is said to be some fifty feet higher than the level of the surrounding lakes is twenty-seven miles long, and another lake on the island is said to be seven or eight miles long, while there are numerous smaller lakes, nearly all of which are well stocked with fine fish. The land, which is now in the market, sells at from 50c. to \$1. per acre, but it is said that if some of the best Indian reserves were put in the market they would sell readily at from \$4 to \$5 per acre.

The favourite railway project here is to build a railway from a point opposite Cabot Head to Little Current, cross to the mainland by a series of small bridges between the little islands which lie in a chain across to the mainland, and then run inland to tap the projected Sault branch. This railway would be connected with the railway system of Ontario by means of a ferry from Manitoulin Island to Cabot Head. Tolerably good turnpikes are being constructed throughout the island at the expense of the Ontario Government.

It was dark when we left Little Current, on the night of the 22nd, and as morning broke we were heading across a broad stretch of open water bound for Bruce Mines. The weather was still as fine as could be wished for, and

the passengers spent a large portion of the morning on deck enjoying the delightfully cool breeze. At a few moments after ten o'clock in the morning Bruce Mines, a somewhat dreary-looking north shore village, was reached, and here another address was presented.

FROM BRUCE MINES TO THE SAULT.

The run through the tortuous channel from Bruce Mines to Sault Ste. Marie, as everybody who has travelled it knows, includes some of the prettiest and most picturesque scenery on the whole of the Lake Superior route. It is like that of the Thousand Islands magnified. As a general thing the islands in the northern archipelago are larger and bolder in outline, the narrow reaches of clear, sparkling water between them are deeper and longer, while at times one sees out through a narrow gap across the apparently limitless sunlit hazy expanse of the open lake. Not far below the Neebish Rapids the steamer passes through a long, narrow channel bounded on either side by rugged, precipitous walls of Laurentian rock, and on the face of an abruptly broken ledge is seen one of the most startling phenomena known to these northern waters. The abrupt face of the little precipice is of dark iron grey trap, but upon this in a sort of dull white or cream-coloured lichen are a pair of figures, rude and unshapely in outline, and not unlike the roughest sort of Japanese design, but they bear a singularly strong resemblance to the figures of two men with packs on their backs and walking in single file. Thirty years ago it is said that two Indian mail carriers were found where they had been frozen to death, lying at the foot of this rock with their heads turned towards it. The remains were found long after their death, and the Indians say that the curious white lichen was then formed just opposite where their bodies lay. Be this as it may, I have never seen any lichen at all resembling this anywhere in the Laurentides, though I have had a somewhat extensive acquaintance with that range from the Saguenay to Cross Lake.

Soon after making the difficult and tortuous passage up the Neebish Rapids the steamer reached the point where the channel opens out into the beautiful Lake George, and here we passed close to the spot where the sunken *Asia* lies, her smashed bow resting on a rock, and high out of the water, while her stern has sunk till the water flows over the hurricane deck. The scenery of the River Ste. Marie is singularly bold and picturesque, a low and apparently fertile flat bordering the river on either side, while this is walled in with rugged rocky ridges richly clad in the verdure of spruces, cedars, and stunted Norway pines.

At Garden River His Excellency was received by a large deputation of Indians. A portion of the wharf was kept clear by Indian marshals armed with long sticks, while a row of chiefs and warriors arrayed in gorgeous attire stood facing the gangway. As soon as His Excellency had landed an opening was cleared in the crowd, and the distinguished visitors were escorted to a pavilion only a short distance in shore, where the addresses were to be presented. Here was a neat little canopy with supports and rafters wrapped with wreaths of evergreens, the floor covered

with Indian made rush mats (containing fanciful patterns worked into them with brightly-dyed rushes), and a roof of tent cloth. Large and tastefully-arranged bouquets of fresh flowers stood along the rail that ran around the dais and the rush mats reached down to the roadway which had been thickly covered with damp sawdust to prevent the visitors' steps from sinking into the deep loose sand.

The Chief of the Garden River Indians, and apparently a leading man in the Ojibway tribe throughout Algoma, "Augusta Shingwauk," was evidently the big man of the occasion. He is very large, stout and dark; with a few straggling grey hairs curling about his chin, and a profusion of dark iron-grey hair falling down over his neck. Though not remarkably obese for one of his age, he would in all probability weigh 240 lbs., and both his face and figure are well rounded. He wore a curious head-dress consisting of a sort of turban of skunkskin well filled with eagle feathers. His vest was of bright scarlet, ornamented with white and crystal beads; he wore grey tweed trousers, and black leggings, half covered with white, red, and yellow beads. The romantic picturesqueness of this much of his costume was singularly "let down," however, by his coat, which consisted of an old dirty linen duster, though this was less commonplace in appearance than it would have been had it been divested of the skunkskin armlets which held the sleeves fast to the wearer's arms at the elbows. He also wore a very common-place looking pair of leather-coloured cowhide slippers. Fastened to his neck by a braid of sweet grass was a large disc of birch bark, bound around with sweet grass and porcupine quills, and bearing figures of illustrative peace and war on the opposite faces, neatly worked in bright colours with dyed porcupine quills. This was a present which he subsequently presented to His Excellency in token of "brotherhood in chiefship."

Another chief wore a moose-skin coat, black trousers, red leggings, and buckskin moccasins, with a fantastic-looking head-dress made of horsehair, partridge wings and eagle feathers. Others were arrayed fantastically in scarlet, but there was scarcely one of these costumes that was not marred by some grotesque modification growing out of a disposition on the part of the wearers to conform to the prevailing fashions of their white brethren.

At Sault Ste Marie His Excellency was received by the white inhabitants, extensive preparations having been made for the reception. After the usual addresses and replies had been gone through, Lord Lorne and party were subsequently shown over the town, visited the Indian schools for boys and girls, and after being rowed across the river in a small boat visited the American Fort and finally rejoined the steamer which passed through the canal, and out into Lake Superior a little after dark. Next morning, about ten o'clock, Michipicoten Island was reached. There is a small settlement at the landing, but the island is for the most part very like some of the most rugged portions of the Laurentian range. From its isolated position it appears to have escaped the ravages of bush fires, and this is why its towering ridges of rock are more richly clad with evergreens than the Laurentides usually are.

His Excellency and party here embarked on board the tug *Mocking Bird*, and were taken to visit one of the mining locations of the Michipicoten Native Copper Mining Company. This is located near the north-western angle of the island. Here the ridges of trap and gneissoid rock appear to be fully three hundred feet high, some of them showing the wildest and most fantastic outlines in sharp relief against the bright and clear summer sky. The tug approached to within about two hundred yards of the shore, where she let go her anchor and the party were taken ashore in small boats. The passengers were particularly struck with the marvellous transparency of the waters of Lake Superior. On reaching the shore His Excellency was shown over the property by Mr. W. W. Stuart, resident manager. The deposit consists of a number of thick veins of amygdaloid, a dark reddish friable ore, containing from 1 to 2½ per cent. of native copper. During the night were the first symptoms of unfavourable weather which have been experienced on the trip, and on this, the morning of the 23rd, there was some wind and fog, though not enough to cause any inconvenience to the passengers.

At Silver Islet His Excellency made a short stop, and evinced considerable interest in the rich specimens of ore and native silver that have been on exhibition there for some years. It is said little or no ore is being shipped just now, but the specimens taken out here at the time of the first excitement may serve the purposes of stock operators quite as well as *bona fide* business transactions.

The steamer is now nearing Prince Arthur's Landing and bringing to a close a trip which has been in all respects a very pleasant one.

RECEPTION AT THUNDER BAY.

PRINCE ARTHUR'S LANDING, July 25.—My last letter closed just as the *Frances Smith* was nearing Prince Arthur's Landing, and the last sentences of the letter were still unwritten when the firing of cannon from the shore told that the Thunder Bay people were awaiting the arrival of His Excellency. Along the long wharf from the steamer to the shore was a row of little evergreens, and as the land was reached rows of evergreens enclosed a broad carpeted avenue which led up beneath a very handsome arch of evergreen to the carpeted dais, where the addresses were presented.

As soon as the ceremonies were over at Prince Arthur's Landing His Excellency stepped into a waggonette, drawn by four white horses, and was taken for a drive to the Town Plot.

After leaving the Town Plot, His Excellency was driven down to the Indian mission, where he was received by Father Bletner, who showed him the pretty little mission church. His Excellency then visited the mission school, which is taught by the Sisters. Miss Martin, the superior, read a short address and the children sang an English hymn, after which Lord Lorne made a few appropriate remarks and then proceeded to visit the convent. From the convent His Excellency went to inspect the garden, where the remarkable growth of vegetables particularly attracted his attention. Altogether, His

Excellency was particularly pleased with what he saw on the trip, the Kam-inistiquia River and the mission coming in for an exceptional share of his admiration.

In the evening the whole party returned to Prince Arthur's Landing, and as soon as it was fairly dark an immense bonfire was lighted, and there was a fine display of fireworks.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM PRINCE ARTHUR'S LANDING TO WABIGOOON LAKE—ROUGH RAILROAD TRAVELLING—PAGAN INDIANS OF WABIGOOON—A PORTABLE MANSION—BEAUTIFUL SCENERY—AN INDIAN POW-WOW—A NOON HALT—ADDRESS AND REPLIES—A WEAKNESS IN THE INDIAN INDEMNITY SYSTEM—A PICTURESQUE CAMP.

WABIGOOON LAKE, Ont., July 26.

LEAVING PRINCE ARTHUR'S LANDING.

Early this morning the beautiful little town of Prince Arthur's Landing was astir and busy with preparations for His Excellency's departure. A train, consisting of three flat cars, the caboose—facetiously christened by the contractors the "Pullman," a wood car, and a powerful Portland locomotive, was in waiting opposite the Queen's Hotel, and by six o'clock the baggage was all aboard, Mr. Hugh Ryan, of the firm of contractors for Section A, who was prevented by temporary illness from accompanying the party over the line, being one of the last to say good-bye and wish His Excellency a pleasant journey. The train moved off amid tremendous cheers from the large crowd assembled to witness its departure, and went rattling swiftly away toward Fort William. The six miles intervening between the two villages was quickly covered. Here the railway runs along a flat of low-lying, but very rich, land that is quite susceptible of perfect drainage. As yet there is not much clearing, but the few farms and gardens that have been cleared are looking extremely well. At Fort William a large crowd assembled to meet the train, His Excellency being lustily cheered as the train pulled up at the crossing. There was some delay here, as a box car, loaded by the caterer for the trip over Section A had to be added to the train. The train was now made up as follows:—Directly behind the locomotive was a flat car carrying an extra supply of wood, then came a box-car containing the caterer's supplies, then a flat-car furnished with seats, then the "Pullman" which had been handsomely fitted up with carpets, sofas, easy chairs, etc., then another flat-car furnished with seats and fitted with a neat, light awning, and last of all a flat-car furnished with seats,

but having no awning. It was nearly seven o'clock as the train moved off up the valley of the Kaministiquia, and almost in the shadow of McKay's Mountain. For nearly seven miles the railway continued through a broad belt of low, rich-looking swamp, but which as yet had been neither cleared nor drained. Then the road rises upon a gravelly plain, covered with a sparse growth of stunted poplar, which has evidently followed the ravages of a comparatively recent bush fire. Here and there some little clearings are to be seen, which are producing fair crops of wheat, oats, and potatoes, the latter looking particularly thrifty.

After running through about ten miles of only moderately good country, which was rapidly becoming rougher and more rocky and sterile, the train climbed a long grade, and looking down over an abrupt cliff on the left, her passengers caught their first view of the swift dark waters of the Kaministiquia rolling down over its rough bed of broken ledges and boulders. Though the shores were rugged walls of rock bristling with the slender charred trunks of tamaracks, hemlocks and pines, the scene was a beautiful one, for away down at the bottom of the ravine the shadowed margin of the foaming river was deeply fringed with a luxuriant growth of black alders clad in the deepest and brightest green; and away on the right, through breaks in the rocky wall, above and overlooking the track, could be seen huge rounded hills of rock thickly covered with a luxuriant growth of fresh young shrubbery, showing the richest of midsummer verdure.

Ten miles further up the train reached the point where the Mattawan falls into the Kaministiquia, and following up the valley of the former, the road passes through a country very much like that along the borders of the Kaministiquia, except that the rocky ridges are lower and less rugged, while some of the depressions have small areas of rich black loam, while there are here and there some small but fairly productive clay flats. Only a short distance up the Mattawan is the junction of Sunshine Creek with that river, and the railway following the valley of the smaller stream presently runs into a region that is utterly barren and sterile.

Sunshine Creek is appropriately named. It is a small, swift stream rushing through a rough channel full of boulders and broken masses of rock. The banks are low and fringed with narrow strips of black alders, and on any bright day at little intervals the stream can be seen through rifts in the foliage flashing in the sunshine.

From the junction of Sunshine Creek to Port Savanne there is little or no land that can ever be of any value, though as the latter station is approached, and flats west of it, there are some very broad stretches of muskeg. These great flats, however, are so near the level of Lac-des-Mille-Lacs that there appears to be no possibility of ever reclaiming them by means of drainage. Before these flats are reached, there are two features that should have been noticed. Some forty-five or fifty miles from Thunder Bay the train passed through a tunnel cut out of the green stone for a distance of 600 feet, and fifty-five miles from Thunder Bay the railway crosses the watershed dividing the waters that ultimately find their way into the St. Lawrence from those falling into Hud-

son Bay. At this point the elevation is 1,100 feet above Lake Superior, the latter being, as everybody knows, 650 feet above the sea level. West of Point Savanne, all the way to Tache the country may be described as a succession of low, rocky ridges with intervening narrow plains and low flats that do not look very inviting from an agricultural point of view, but I am of opinion that the time is not far off when many of these great marshy flats shall have been converted into rich, productive areas. Passing over these same flats last July, I saw much more water over them than there is at present. Already the railway ditches and off-take drains have done much in the way of reclaiming them, and I think it very probable that a large portion of them will in time become dry enough to grow excellent timothy or blue joint grass, to say the least of it, while it is quite possible that other crops requiring a still dryer soil might yet flourish here.

THE NOON HALT.

About noon a halt was made for lunch at a place called the "Narrows," where the railway grade has been carried across a small strait in South Lake. A pleasanter spot for a halt on a hot day could not have been found along the line. There was a light fresh breeze from the water sweeping across the track; there were no flies, no dust, no smoke from the locomotive, and, in short, nothing that was objectionable; while the close proximity of the lake and a short strip of sandy beach afforded the travellers an excellent opportunity for washing off the dust. In a short time a table was erected in the canopied flat car and an excellent luncheon was soon ready.

As soon as luncheon was finished the train was again speeding on her way. The next halt was made at Pine Plains, where Mr. Ginty, one of the contractors, has his little portable house set up for the present. Mr. Ginty met the train as soon as it came to a stand still, and was presented to His Excellency by Mr. Marks, another member of the contracting firm, who had come along from Thunder Bay, to exercise a personal supervision over the many provisions made for the comfort of His Excellency and party through the first stage of their journey over the Canada Pacific Railway. As soon as the presentations were over, a visit was paid to Mr. Ginty's little house, where raspberries and cream and other refreshments had been provided for the party.

A PORTABLE MANSION.

In passing over the line last season, I gave a detailed description of Mr. Ginty's curiously and ingeniously contrived portable house, and it is not necessary to repeat it here. The place, however, had been beautifully decorated, both as to the interior and exterior, under the direction of Mrs. Pollock, the housekeeper. A beautiful arch, or rather canopy, thickly covered with pine twigs of the brightest green, completely enveloped the little walk which leads up to the door, and this walk itself was thickly carpeted with evergreen boughs, and bordered with the most beautiful mosses, over which had been sprinkled a few pretty and delicate wild flowers. All around this

house little evergreens had been set out for the occasion, and the interior was beautifully and tastefully fitted up with wreaths of evergreens and flowers. A bouquet of flowers grown in a little flower garden in the wilderness was presented by Mr. Ginty to His Excellency, and after the operation of the steam shovel which is at work here had been watched with interest for some few minutes, the journey was resumed. As the train approached Tache station the once famous "floating muskeg" was passed. It is comparatively dry now, and any person looking at it now would find it difficult to realize what a watery and almost impassable bog it was only about a year ago. At Tache there was an arch with the inscription, "Welcome to the C. P. R." as well as some few flags, wreaths, &c. Here Mr. Purcell, of the contracting firm, came on board the train and was presented to His Excellency, but before starting he took his place on the locomotive along with the engine driver, as it was expected that the remainder of the line would be in very bad condition.

West of Tache the railway runs through a region of white sand that appears to lie in very heavy deposits. A few miles further clay ridges and flats are reached, and these cover an area of nearly fifty miles in length along the line of railway. Indeed the soil of the Wabigoon region as well as that bordering the east shore of Eagle Lake is very fair, but I question if the climate would not scare away many an Old Country farmer. Last winter the snow along here is said to have been four and a half feet deep, and on the 24th December, 1879, a spirit thermometer registered as low as 56 degrees below zero.

About four in the afternoon Kenebutch Lake was passed. This is a beautiful sheet of water, the rich verdure of whose thickly wooded shores grows down until the lowest branches are laved by every passing wave. The road-bed up to Tache had been very good, but beyond that point it began to fall off very rapidly in character. True, there had been some efforts at patching it in various places, which have had the effect of making the bad places just passable and no more. Red and white clay were found very closely associated in alternate layers, varying from a quarter of an inch to an inch and a half in thickness. These layers were always uniform in character, though often grading upward from the thickest to the thinnest. In places where cuttings had been made through some of these clay ridges it was found that occasionally the clay was resting on quicksand, and the result was that it often appeared as if the whole bottom was about to drop out of the cutting. Of course the only way to set the track right in such places is to underdrain the quicksand, and then fill or ballast up to the grade once more. When only a few miles east of the camp on Wabigoon Lake, the first and only mishap of the day took place. The forward trucks of the caterer's box car went off at a particularly bad place in the track, and when the train was not going more than about two miles an hour. Two huge iron dogs were fastened beside the rails, and with their incline running down toward the misplaced wheels, the locomotive was then backed

up for about a car length, and the train was on the track again and ready to move on in less than five minutes from the time the accident happened.

It was about seven o'clock when the train at last drew up at the camp prepared for the reception of His Excellency and party on the north shore of Wabigoon Lake. A large assembly of Indians were in waiting opposite the spot prepared for the landing of the Governor General, while a still larger crowd of white labourers were in waiting on the hill in front of the camp.

PAGAN INDIANS.

These were the red men of the Little Wabigoon, and though they have had plenty of opportunities to become Christianized Mission Indians they have shown no disposition to avail themselves of the advantages afforded them by training in the ways of white men, so that to-day there are no more degraded nor benighted pagans in North America than they are. Their faces were painted in the most hideous manner with thick stripes and blotches of white, blue, green, yellow, and scarlet paint. The chief, who is a broad-shouldered, stoutly-built Indian with a large head, a broad, coarse, sensuous-looking face (which, however, is far from lacking in intelligence), stepped forward and presented the address, which was neatly written in English on birch bark.

His Excellency thanked the Indians briefly for the beautiful and unique-looking address with which they had presented him, and said that he would instruct the Indian agent at Fort Francis to give them some presents by which they would have occasion to remember this visit. His announcement was received with emphatic grunts of satisfaction.

A very brief address from the engineers of the road, beautifully and appropriately engrossed on tracing linen, was presented by the engineers of Contract 4. It only consisted of about half a dozen lines, wishing His Excellency a pleasant journey.

The camp on Wabigoon Lake which was reached by His Excellency and party on Tuesday night, was an imposing affair. All the grass and shrubs had been cleared off the summit of a high, flat-topped knoll, and here the tents were pitched, looking southward out over one of the larger bays of Great Wabigoon Lake. Each tent was fitted up with a thick carpeting of spruce boughs, while two cots were put up in the tent which was occupied by His Excellency and the Rev. Dr. MacGregor. In front of the tents a table had been erected for the occasion, and a little after nine in the evening, the caterer had an excellent dinner prepared, kerosene lanterns being hung on poles standing near the tables so that they might furnish light without imparting any unpleasant odour.

In fact the arrangements made by the contractors on Section A have been eminently successful from first to last. The whole trip by rail, some 220 miles, was made in eleven hours running time, and when it is remembered that from Tache westward the train had to be run with the utmost caution, the time made on the whole day's journey must be regarded as very good indeed.

After dinner the travellers spent the last moments of the little daylight that had not yet quite faded out of the west in gazing upon the lovely scene to the southward. The lake, which had been rippleless since sunset, was still as motionless and mirror-like as ever, but the sharp, clear outline of the little green-capped, rock-bound islets and their bright reflection in the gleaming flood was gone, and in its place was a soft, indistinct, feather-edged tracing giving only a suspicion of the grey and green of rocks and foliage as seen an hour before, while all was wrapped in the soft, rich purple and subtranslucent blue which blended together and seemed as if they were the combined expression of the fading sunlight, the rising mist, the smoke from the wigwams, and the commingled colours of sky, rocks, water, and verdure. Away to the west side of the little bay and on a low, wooded peninsula was an encampment of Indians, the ruddy glare of their camp fires coming out in strong relief against the dark green wall of foliage behind them, while a thin blue stratum of smoke floated just above the dark spur-like tops of their bark wigwams. Over the shining waters came the dismal chanting of their singers and the monotonous tom-tom of their rude drums, while at intervals a dozen half-naked forms could be seen dancing and gesticulating wildly in the fire light.

Messrs. Purcell and Marks decided that it might be, as well to have some of them conduct a pow-wow in the immediate vicinity of His Excellency's camp, and accordingly they sent a proposal to the them, of which they were only too glad to take advantage. Just under the brow of the little plateau on which the tents were pitched, and between the railway track and the lake shore, was a little smooth flat, about thirty feet square, and nearly, or quite, surrounded by boulders. In the centre of this little spot a fire was soon built, and then two young Indians, half naked and fantastically painted, stepped up close to the fire, and laying a large Indian drum on the ground between them they began to sing in a monotonous and unmusical cadence "Hi ya, hi ya, hi ya," while the men of the band, young and old, began to dance. The dance itself was very uninteresting. Each man either held a stick in both hands, which were extended downward in front of him, or else held them down close to his side. There was very little of anything in the shape of a step. In fact the shifting of the feet appeared rather accidental than otherwise, as the whole motion appeared to be confined to the bending of the hips and knees. Altogether the dancing was ungraceful in the extreme, while the music was even more atrociously bad than the dancing. As the dance progressed, however, the dancers appeared to throw a little more spirit into it; many essayed something in the way of a half shuffling step, while nearly all gave occasional shouts, and flung their arms about their heads with a wild abandon that showed that they were at last entering somewhat into the spirit of it.

Mr. Sidney Hall, who has proved himself one of the most indefatigable of workers, took several sketches while the pow-wow was in progress, and the whole picture as seen from the brow of the plateau overlooking the spot was certainly a weird one. In the midst of the group the fire itself was hidden.

by the dusky forms clustered closely around it, but its ruddy light fell in fitful flashes full upon the dark, upturned faces and the copper-coloured arms tossed wildly aloft, and from the cliff above it looked as though these arms and faces lit up with a lurid glare were floating upon the surface of a great fiery cauldron, while all around and below was the blackest of darkness.

After surveying the wild scene from the cliff for some time, His Excellency and the majority of the party went down to the spot to obtain a closer view of the Indians and have some conversation with them through Cantin, the interpreter. As soon as they were seen in the outer circle, Chief Kawakeioah made a lengthy speech in his own language, which Cantin laconically interpreted as follows:—"The Chief has to say for himself that he has been smoking his pipe empty all this evening."

Mr. Roche gave him a piece of tobacco, and then the dancing was resumed. During the next pause in the dancing His Excellency asked who was the best trapper in the band. The reply as translated by the interpreter was as follows: "The Chief says that in his younger days he could beat any of them, but now he is old and has to take a back seat, but that he has a son-in-law who can take his place."

A few minutes later His Excellency was leaving, after having informed the Indians that he would instruct the agents to give them some little presents by which they would remember his visit, when he was recalled by the Chief, who was making a speech, which the interpreter rendered as follows:—

"He says that many think him to be seventy years old, but he is only fifty, and is still smart and strong, and that all along he has had two wives."

On being asked by Mr. Austin why he had two wives, he replied that by having two wives he could show more children on the ground at the payment and draw more money.

I have heard the objection raised to the existing system of paying the Indians that it discourages Christianity by offering a premium on the pagan practice of polygamy, but I never saw a more striking exemplification of the fact than was contained in this brief and sententious reply of the Wabigoon chief.

As soon as His Excellency had returned, Messrs. Marks and Purcell gave the red men liberal presents of pork and biscuits and sent them back to camp rejoicing.

CHAPTER V.

FROM-WABIGOON CAMP TO BELL'S LAKE, VIA EAGLE LAKE—MAGNIFICENT INLAND LAKE SCENERY—BY PORTAGE AND CANOE ACROSS THE "MISSING LINK"—OVER THE "LAKE OF FLOWERS"—A PICTURESQUE SPOT—BUSH FIRES—LUXURIOUS BARGES—A CHAIN OF BEAUTIFUL LAKES.

GARDEN ISLAND, EAGLE LAKE, July 27.—There was a stir in the Wabigoon camp early this morning, and breakfast was served very promptly, after which the whole party were soon hurrying down to the lakeside to embark. The Indians, with a large number of squaws, were on the shore waiting to see His Excellency off.

While waiting for the completion of preparations for a start Lord Lorne again met Kawakaioosh, and desired to be introduced to his wife. The old chief complied with his request with wonderful alacrity, introducing His Excellency to both of his wives, who were smoking short and very unromantic looking cheap briar root pipes at the time.

In a few moments everything was in readiness, and the start was made, the little steamer *Wabigoon* taking the baggage, the servants, a portion of the Indians, and such of the party as cared to go on board of her, while His Excellency and the remainder of the passengers took passage in a large sail-boat which the steamer had taken in tow for the occasion. Behind this again came two large bark canoe loads of Indians, who were to pack the baggage over the much-dreaded seven-mile portage. Both tug and sail-boat were handsomely decorated for the occasion.

The voyage over Wabigoon Lake was full of interest, and one of the most thoroughly enjoyable stages yet met upon the journey through the wilderness. The heat and noise of the tug were far enough away, so that they were not felt nor heard by the passengers in the sail-boat. There was not a ripple on the glassy bay from which the start was made, and in the crystal atmosphere the little islets crested with verdure and girded with grey and purple rock, cast a reflection that was sharp in outline and as bright and prominent in colours as the tangible reality above the water line. Indeed, many of the smaller isles looked like little spheres belted with broad zones of water-worn rock and covered with brilliant verdure at the poles. But it is useless to attempt to describe the loveliness of this inland lake scenery; it is utterly indescribable, and he who has never seen it can form no idea of it, no matter how much he might read on the subject. The broad sunlit traverse with its myriads of dark-blue wavelets flashing their tiny crests of burnished gold in the sunlight, the darkly shadowed cove, the long, rippleless reach gleaming in the morning sun, the low sedgy bay with its tall sun-gilt grasses resplendent in green, all bid defiance to description. The morning was as bright and

beautiful as one could imagine. Every trace of mist and smoke had been cleared, and the atmosphere was literally and absolutely transparent, the sky was of a brilliant hue, and cloudless, except in the west, where there were floating a few little cloud islands of billowy French grey, with soft, feathery edges of the richest purple, and these were faithfully mirrored in many a glassy reach where the light breezes that were stirring could not reach the tranquil water. At about noon the Wabigoon end of the dreaded seven-mile portage was reached, and after the passengers had been taken ashore in the sail-boat and canoes through tranquil shallows where the beautiful white and yellow lilies—from which Wabigoon (lake of flowers) takes its name—were floating in rich profusion, luncheon was served in the most primitive and picturesque style. Seated on logs or mossy mounds, some in shaded nooks to avoid the heat, some close to the smoking camp-fire to escape the mosquitoes and other insect pests, the travellers and the Indian voyageurs took a hurried lunch, and then began the crossing of this most formidable obstacle looked for between Toronto and Winnipeg. The walk was not a pleasant one, though not nearly so troublesome as it proved to me less than a year ago, when with a small pack on my back, and a very lame ankle to impede me, I crossed it in the opposite direction. The path had been improved especially for this occasion, and altogether the walking was not at all bad. The flies and mosquitoes were not nearly so troublesome as had been anticipated. The day was hot, however, and half way over, where a table and seats for a resting place for His Excellency had been prepared, a bush fire had not only swept away all the preparations, but was still raging close at hand, making the "resting-place" unbearably hot and smoky. His Excellency crossed the portage in two hours and a quarter, which was the quickest time made by any of the party, though Captain Percival, who started a few minutes ahead of him, and shot a fine brace of partridges, accompanied him for the last six miles of the journey. The others all made the trip in good time, though all were pretty hot and tired with their long tramp through the close, hot bush, where scarcely a breath of wind could reach them.

EAGLE LAKE.

On the arrival at the Eagle Lake side of the long portage, two splendid bark canoes, gorgeously painted, furnished with flags and manned with crews of white and Indian voyageurs handsomely uniformed in blue caps, scarlet shirts and white trousers, were in waiting to convey the travellers to the barge which was ready, a few hundred yards from shore, to take them to the first Section B camp on Garden Island; a few miles up Eagle Lake. The barge was very handsomely fitted up for the occasion. It was painted white, beautifully canopied and carpeted, and richly decked with flags and streamers of red, white and blue. On board the barge was a hamper of iced wines and cooling drinks of all sorts, which were exceedingly acceptable after the long, hot walk over the portage. As soon as the passengers were on board the barge the tug steamed away towards Garden Island.

As the boats were nearing the camp, the tones of the bagpipe floated across the water, and a few minutes later the whole party were shown to their respective tents. The camp here is on one of the most inviting spots in the whole lake. The island, which is several acres in extent, consists of a plateau of considerable height, and on a grassy portion of this, affording a beautiful prospect to the southward, the tents were pitched, all facing the south. In the sleeping tents were stretchers set upon logs, and furnished in the most comfortable fashion with spotless linen, washstands, towels, mirrors, and everything necessary to the comfort of the travellers, while there was a large dining-tent, store and kitchen tents, and in short everything that could possibly make the camp comfortable and luxurious. After a somewhat elaborate dinner had been served, the travellers reclined on a carpeting of buffalo robes to watch the evening shades settling down over the scene, which was one of surpassing loveliness. Before them lay the placid lake, studded with lovely little islets; the water was just catching the last purple tints of the fast fading daylight, while in the west the lemon and gold and orange tints of the sunset were fading into the soft purple and grey of the deepening twilight. Half an hour later the stars were shining brightly overhead, and the first camp in Section B was as silent as if the spot were untenanted. In this camp His Excellency and party were met and heartily welcomed by Mr. John J. Macdonald, of Section B contracting firm.

BELL'S LAKE, July 28.

FROM EAGLE LAKE TO BELL'S LAKE.

After a sumptuous breakfast in camp, His Excellency and party were off again at seven o'clock for a run of some sixty-two miles up Eagle Lake, without anything in the shape of a portage or other species of interruption to navigation. As the party took their places in the luxuriously-appointed York boat, with its white and scarlet canopy, its gay flags and long silken streamers, the remark was made that this was more like the Prince of Wales' progress through India than roughing it in the backwoods of Canada. The display was a grand one, but the best feature of it was that there was no display at the expense of thorough comfort and efficiency. The two large canoes with their uniformed crews were towed behind the York boat. The piper, along with such of the party as preferred to do so, rode on the tug, and from time to time the strains of the bag-pipes mingled with the monotonous snorting and grunting of the little steamer. As the miniature fleet passed the Company's Eagle Lake headquarters, which lay more than a mile to the northward, a salute of twenty-one nitro-glycerine explosions was fired. In addition to paying a compliment to His Excellency I have no doubt these twenty-one explosions did efficient work towards the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, for each of them evidently moved a large quantity of rock. First would be seen a puff of yellow smoke rolling upward, and through it dark masses of rock large and small, then a jagged, irregular line of foam would flash along the water's edge, caused by the falling of the rock

fragments into the lake, and when all this had subsided and disappeared a loud, sullen boom would come rolling across the water. The salute was certainly a very effective one.

The trip up Eagle Lake was delightful, but as the leading features of the scenery are similar to those of Wabigoon Lake, already described, no further description is necessary. As is the case in Wabigoon, many of the islands in Eagle Lake, and especially those in the south-western quarter, appear to be really fertile, and capable of being rendered very productive for a small outlay. Indeed, if Winnipeg should ever have a resident population of sufficient size and wealth to make contiguous summer resorts desirable adjuncts, no finer sites for rustic summer cottages could be found than some of these lovely little wooded islands in Eagle Lake.

At noon a table was laid on the barge, and an excellent luncheon served in a manner that might well excite the wonder of those who suppose that luxuries are unobtainable in the North-West. Indeed there was nothing wanting that could have been obtained had the travellers been sitting down to luncheon in Toronto or Montreal.

AT CLEAR WATER LAKE.

It was nearly five o'clock when the west end of Eagle Lake was reached, and here it was found necessary for the tug to cast off the barge and allow her to be poled up the narrow winding channel through the marsh to the landing. The two canoes, with flags flying at stem and stern, led the way, and soon both canoes and crews were lost to view in the tortuous windings of the stream, but above the waving green and gold of the sunlit marsh grass fluttered the red cross flags as the light crafts that bore them swiftly threaded the hidden watery path to the portage.

The portage road was in admirable condition, and the baggage as well as the two canoes already mentioned were soon safely over it. The distance to be traversed here was only half a mile, and the walk was thoroughly enjoyed by the travellers, who were glad of an opportunity to stretch their limbs, after a ride of sixty-two miles over the lake. On reaching the farther side of the portage, and looking out over Clear Water Lake, a brilliant sight presented itself. Here were no less than ten large and brilliantly-painted bark canoes all fully manned with crews made up of the very best canoe men in the North-West, and all uniformed in red shirts, blue caps, and white trousers. Nearly all were Indians or half-breeds save one crew of Scotchmen, who manned the first canoe, which was occupied by His Excellency, Dr. McGregor, and Mr. Austin. In the second canoe were Col. DeWinton, Mr. Sidney Hall, and Dr. Sewell, while the third was occupied by Captain Chater, Capt. Percival, and Capt. Bagot. After these came the remaining seven canoes, the whole flotilla carrying no less than eighty people, fifty of whom were uniformed canoe men. The run across Clear Water Lake was one of about seven miles, and then the long train of canoes passed into a lovely little fiord, and through a narrow canal, cut by the section B contractors for convenience in freighting into what is called Summit Lake, a

lovely little lakelet about three miles long and walled in by huge towering ridges of almost solid Laurentian rock. Just outside the canal His Excellency's canoe was halted in the shadow of a lofty precipice, which presented a perpendicular wall of unbroken iron grey rock facing westward. To the north rose a rugged mountain of grizzly rock full of tiny niches, nearly each of which contained a little stunted pine. There were little terraces, too, with rows of stunted trees growing upon them, and here and there were little shrubs almost hanging from small crevices, the whole looking like a rude attempt at landscape gardening on a gigantic scale. As the gay coloured canoes, with their brightly painted paddles and fancifully uniformed crews came to a halt beneath these frowning walls of rock, the picture was one of singular beauty.

Across Clear Water Lake the canoes ran at a great rate, the crystal drops flashing from each paddle, and a curling wreath of spray gurgling under each delicately rounded prow.

It was nearly dark, when the Water-shed portage was crossed, and the travellers soon found themselves afloat on Bear's Neck Lake.

Thus far the lakes which were passed were tributary to the waters of Eagle Lake, but now the water-shed had been crossed and the streams were found flowing southward toward Lake of the Woods. The height of land or water-shed here consists of a high, narrow ridge of gneissoid rock, and the Indian trail over the portage is less than half a mile in length. The ordinary portage road is somewhat longer, however. The lofty ridge which constitutes the water-shed trends west and south from the portage, and skirts along the west side of Bear's Neck Lake and then passes away westward along the north shore of Bell's Lake. Bear's Neck Lake is only about a mile and a half long, and of course it was traversed in a very short time, and then a short and easy portage brought the travellers to the north shore of one of the most beautiful of all the lakes in the North-west. This is Bell's Lake or Dryberry Lake as it is sometimes called.

The second camp on section B. was not at the portage landing, however, and the passengers had to re-embark and coast eastward about two hundred yards where a camp was sighted that even surpassed that on Garden Island in Eagle Lake. In the back ground rose a high wooded mountain but the camp was on a strip of well-wooded, low, sandy beach. His Excellency's tent was just opposite the wharf, and the others were ranged on either side of it, all fronting southward, and close to the water's edge. The wharf, the walk leading up from it, and a broad border all along in front of the tents, were all thickly carpeted with spruce boughs, as were also the floors of the tents themselves and the spaces between them. The tents were furnished with faultless beds on stretchers as at Eagle Lake, and in the space beside the beds the spruce boughs were covered with buffalo robes. Each bed was covered with an excellent mosquito net, and in short the appointments of the camp included everything that could possibly conduce to the comfort of the travellers. Mr. James Bain, who has had several years' experience in the North-West, superintended the construction of this camp, and Constables

O'Keefe, Cameron, and McKenna were on the ground to preserve order. Dinner was served about 10 o'clock, and even after it was over the travellers remained out of their tents for some time enjoying the lovely scene. Close to the water's edge, and on either side of the wharf two camp-fires were burning, and by their light the smooth, sandy bottom of the bay could be seen through the limpid water fully thirty yards from the shore.

There was not one present who was not prepared to aver that the camp at Bell's Lake far surpassed anything of the kind he had ever seen.

CHAPTER VI.

ON WHITEFISH BAY AND LAKE OF THE WOODS—THROUGH A BEAUTIFUL ARCHIPELAGO—BLACK CREEK—BLUEBERRY LAKE—A DARK CLOUD IN A SUNNY SKY—THE FATAL ACCIDENT—ARRIVAL AT RAT PORTAGE.

RAT PORTAGE, July 29.—An early start was made this morning, and breakfast was out of the way and the passengers in the canoes before seven o'clock. For the first three miles of the eighteen-mile run across Bell's (or Dryberry) Lake the canoes were strung out in a long gay-coloured procession behind the little tug, but as the wind was blowing freshly, on approaching the first traverse (or open water stretch) Mr. Macdonald deemed it more prudent to take in the tow lines and let each canoe shift for itself. There were small white-caps rolling in the traverse, but in that wondrously limpid lake there was no sediment to set in motion, and the waves looked as transparent as glass, while their crests were of a pearly rather than a snowy tint. But when the little fleet of canoes went dashing amongst the tiny breakers and sent the drops of spray flying from their paddles the scene was one of incomparable loveliness. The remainder of the run across Bell's Lake was made in good time, and a portage of about a mile brought the travellers to the navigable portion of a lovely stream that goes winding through a narrow belt of marsh, bordered on its outer edges with an exceedingly rich growth of black alders, backed by a well-grown forest of silver-leaved poplar, white birch, and Norway and Jack pine. The beautiful winding stream that flows for the most of its whole length of three miles over a bottom of short rich growing bright green grass, is as clear as crystal, with an average depth of from six to ten feet, but it has been absurdly misnamed "Black Creek."

A run of six miles from the mouth of the little stream just described brought the fleet across Blueberry Lake, and then a portage of half a mile or five furlongs brought them to a landing some three miles from the mouth of

a small stream emptying into Whitefish Bay, the most easterly portion of the Lake of the Woods.

On this portage, which constitutes the division between Blueberry Lake and the Lake of the Woods, there is a very fair supply of good-looking Norway pine. The trees, though small as compared with those of the Georgian Bay and Ottawa pineries, are still very much larger than are to be seen elsewhere in this region. There are also some fair-sized sticks of Jack pine to be seen here.

As soon as the first canoes were over the portage, His Excellency and a portion of the party started down the river to the rapids, where another tug and another York boat were in waiting to convey them over the Lake of the Woods to this point, but Col. de Winton, Dr. Sowell, Mr. John J. Macdonald, Dr. Blanchard, and some others remained longer at the portage. It was while they were waiting there that the unfortunate teamster McManus came to such an untimely end. A minor accident occurred down at the rapids about this time. Mr. Austin, of the *London Times*, had just stepped out of the canoe which had brought him down the river, and as the heat at the time was absolutely overpowering, he started to walk across a row of boulders that stood up out of the swift water with the view of finding a good bathing place. It is probable that the intense heat had rendered him somewhat giddy, and at all events he reeled and stumbling fell headlong into the swift current. The water was not more than three feet deep where he fell in, but he struck his forehead upon a jagged point of rock and received several ugly bruises. Before any one could reach the spot to render him assistance he had scrambled out again, thoroughly drenched and pretty badly shaken. He made his way to the barge, however, not very seriously the worse of his mishap.

It was about three o'clock when the last passengers and baggage were safely aboard the barge and tug, and when the fleet of canoes with their red-shirted voyageurs were strung out like a monster serpent of red, white and blue in the wake of the beautifully canopied and carpeted barge which carried the Governor-General and his party. Like the York boat left on Eagle Lake, this one, provided for the last long stage of the journey along Section B, was furnished with all the comforts and luxuries that could be thought of; but it had also the advantage of being considerably larger than its predecessor of Eagle Lake, so that its occupants could walk about as much as they pleased without stepping over or otherwise incommoding those who were more quietly disposed. An excellent luncheon was served on starting from Whitefish Bay, and then for the remainder of the afternoon and evening the travellers enjoyed the incomparably beautiful and picturesque scenery of the great archipelago, in which the Lake of the Woods is lost and Winnipeg River is mysteriously born. During the afternoon two tugs and one large barge, bringing excursionists from Rat Portage, met the little fleet, and forming in line after it, followed to the end of the day's journey. It was ten o'clock and raining when Rat Portage was reached, nevertheless the plucky little metropolis of Section B. made a brave display, and the entry was an impos-

ing one in spite of the rain and darkness. The wharf was thronged with people despite the bad weather, but the travellers were hurried through the crowd as quickly and quietly as possible, and now everything is quiet for to-night.

CHAPTER VII.

AN ENTHUSIASTIC RECEPTION AT RAT PORTAGE—A LARGE GATHERING OF ABORIGINES—GORGEOUSLY PAINTED INDIANS OF THE LAKE OF THE WOODS—REVELLE AT RAT PORTAGE—A MISCELLANEOUS AUDIENCE—AN INDIAN ENTERTAINMENT—DESCRIPTION OF THE CHIEF.

RAT PORTAGE, July 30.—Though His Excellency and party were not stirring quite as early as usual, Rat Portage was wide awake at such an hour in the morning as might lead any unprejudiced person to believe that very many of her citizens had not slept at all. At any rate there was no lack of bustle and uproar at sunrise, and there was no cessation until His Excellency stepped on board the train in waiting for him on the West side of the Winnipeg River, or, as the station is locally known, "Camp Two."

The reception accorded the Governor-General at Rat Portage was a whole-souled and enthusiastic one. Not only the beauty and fashion (Rat Portage is uncommonly well provided with pretty women for a frontier village of its size), but the men, women and children of all classes, white and copper-coloured, turned out, and even the very extensive canine population sent out a strong delegation to take up their quarters among the Indians who were squatting and lounging around on the vacant ground or "commons" on the east bank of the Winnipeg, close to the hotel where His Excellency and party were stopping. There were two arches, one of which was only an unpretending affair, under which Lord Lorne had to pass in coming from the wharf last night, while the other, which was situated on the main street, was a decidedly imposing and handsome one. At about eleven o'clock, Dr. Hanson, Chairman of the Citizens' Committee, accompanied by several members of the Committee, waited on His Excellency, who received them on the verandah of the hotel. Dr. Hanson then read an address of welcome, to which His Excellency made an appropriate reply.

THE RED MEN

The red men took no unimportant part in the reception at Rat Portage. There were some 500 of them camped at the narrows near the village, and about ten o'clock the majority of them crossed over in a large fleet of canoes. Of course many Indians and half-breeds had been lounging about the village all the morning, but by far the largest share of them came over with the fleet. They were

dressed in the most picturesque of Ojibway costumes, wearing most of them very bright colours. (This, of course, only applies in cases where the red men wore clothing enough to be worth mentioning.)—Nearly all the men and boys were more or less painted, some of the "young swells" having the most elaborate patterns worked out in bright colours upon their faces. Altogether, as the canoes, all well-filled and all in a compact flotilla, came slowly over the sun-gilt ripples of the Winnipeg, the scene was one that once witnessed would not readily be forgotten. As they neared the shore the fleet halted and the Indians fired a volley with their fowling pieces. The firing was done in that jerky and spasmodic manner always characteristic of Indian salutes. When the firing had ceased the Indians hurried shoreward. The landing was made with a great deal of deliberation, however, and finally they marched up the street past the hotel, the great chief Mawindobenessé with a warrior supporting each arm as though he were old and feeble. Mr. George McPherson read an address on behalf of the Indians of Lake of the Woods, to which His Excellency made a brief but very appropriate reply, after which the Indians entertained their distinguished visitors with a dance.

The music was much like that given by the Wabigoon Indians. The cadence was the same, but several of the squaws joined in the singing here, and that improved it decidedly. Though these pagan Indians never appear to learn any tune save that execrable and monotonous "Hi-ya," some of the squaws have very sweet and clear voices, that even lend a semblance of melody to the only attempt at a tune which I have ever heard these Pagan Ojibways sing, or try to sing. On the other hand, I last summer heard a Christian Indian from the White Dog Mission sing "Nearer my God to Thee" and one or two other hymns with remarkable correctness and in excellent voice. The dancing that followed was of the most grotesque character, only the men and boys engaging in it. Their figures were bent constantly at both hips and knees, but instead of simply springing up and down as the Wabigoon Indians did for the greater part of the time, they shuffled and kicked about, keeping time to the music with a sort of gliding step, which was long and productive of considerable exertion, but never particularly rapid.

Mawindobenessé, the great chief, is certainly one of the finest looking Indians I have ever seen, and though he was carefully supported as he walked up from his canoe, it turned out that all this apparent infirmity was merely put on to magnify his greatness in the presence of the distinguished visitors whose eyes he supposed to be upon him, for as soon as the dancing commenced he was one of the first to engage in it, and he was quite as ready to keep it up as were any of his subjects. Though he has a grand pair of shoulders, straight and broad, without the smallest inclination to stoop, a full chest symmetrically tapered toward the waist, and though in short Mawindobenessé has a remarkably fine figure it is his face that makes the strongest impression in one's memory. He has a broad, high forehead that recedes slightly and regularly, almost or quite from the eyebrows. His eyes are decidedly good, though partially thrown back by his prominent brows and cheek bones. His nose has just enough of the eagle's beak about it to escape being Grecian, his

mouth has plenty of firmness and is unmistakable in expression, while his lower jaw would indicate that he had all the physical courage, but none of the brutality of the successful prize-fighter. He looks like a man of superior courage, intelligence, and character, and in looking at him it would be hard to divest oneself of the idea that he was not devoid of culture. Mr. McColl of the Indian department, who speaks Ojibway fluently, tells me that on one occasion at the north-west angle during some of the treaty negotiations, Mawindobenesse made a speech of some two hours duration which was fluently delivered, contained many really eloquent passages, and little if any useless repetitions of ideas. It is almost needless to add to this description of this great chief, whose home is upon one of the richest spots in the wondrously fertile valley of Rainy River, that his authority over the other chiefs and Indians of his region, is nearly or quite absolute. None of the smaller chiefs ever appear to question his wisdom, goodness or power, and in addition to being a nearly or quite absolute ruler, Mawindobenesse appears to be an extremely popular one. Of course, he was gotten up in great style for the occasion. His long black hair hung in heavy masses down his broad shoulders. His face (all except the upper angle of his forehead on the right-hand side) was painted a very light olive-green ticked with vermilion and bright green, and all this was bordered with a stripe of dark green about half an inch wide. Outside of this border, the upper corner of his forehead, already alluded to, was painted a deep blood-red. He wore a heavy beaded collar, to which was attached a heavy silver medal, and he was naked to the waist, his body being painted with alternate stripes of dark-brown and white, though here the paint was only put on very lightly, and not in sufficient quantities to hide the skin. He wore a short scarlet skirt, breechclout and beaded leggings. Some of the younger men were painted in the most extraordinary manner; a favourite device appeared to be a bright green, blue or purple ground-work, covering the eyes and upper part of the face like a mask, and on this bright ground would be curious rings of white and vermilion, looking like fancifully coloured eyelet holes, from a quarter to three-sixteenths of an inch in diameter. Others would have the forehead and nose painted a snowy white, and the remainder of the face yellow, blue, green, or blood red. Many of the men were nearly naked, and in such cases the scanty apparel worn consisted to a great extent of bead-work and eagle feathers. While the dancing was still in progress, His Excellency and party re-embarked in the York boat, which was towed over to "Camp Two," where the special train was in waiting to receive them. A large number of Rat Portage people followed to the landing in the tug *Mosher*, and gave His Excellency one more cheer as the train moved off. Before going westward, however, the train backed down to give the visitors an opportunity of seeing one of the numerous falls on the Winnipeg River.

CHAPTER VIII

HIS EXCELLENCY'S DEPARTURE FROM RAT PORTAGE—A SERIES OF INDIAN FESTIVITIES—GRUMBLING RED MEN—AN INVITATION TO FEAST ON DOG SOUP—AN INTRODUCTION TO SEVERAL INDIAN CHIEFS—THE FALLS OF WINNIPEG RIVER—A DOG FEAST—MYSTERIOUS CEREMONIES—INTERESTING PARTICULARS.

RAT PORTAGE, Aug. 1.—The Governor-General left this village about noon on the 30th ult.

On returning from "Camp Two" after the Vice-Regal special train had left, I first made the acquaintance of a number of the chiefs and Indians who were still at Rat Portage, some of them not too well pleased with Lord Lorne's early, and to them unexpected, exit. At the time he left they were dancing, and they had fully expected that he would have been only too glad to have watched them for four or five hours instead of half an hour. Then they were to have a dog feast on the following day over at the Narrows, and His Excellency might not only have witnessed the imposing ceremonies attached thereto, but in consideration of his high rank, and the extraordinarily high esteem in which they held him, he might have been treated to a basin of dog soup, and have eaten a choice morsel of boiled dog. Like certain other estimable citizens of the Dominion who have not fully understood and approved of Lord Lorne's programme, these red men grumbled a little, but whether or not they were disposed to attach the whole of the blame to Col. De Winton I am not prepared to say. Many of the notables I met on this occasion remembered quite well having met me last summer or in 1874, but I will introduce a few of them to the reader as they were introduced to me, regardless of former acquaintanceships.

First of course came "Mawindobenesse," which being literally translated into English is "Bird Gatherer," and freely translated means "Thunderer." The idea is that the voice of this mighty chief is so like the thunder that the birds gather together in little terror-stricken groups when they hear it, just as they do when they are terrified by loud peals of thunder. Mawindobenesse is the great chief of all the Indians in the whole region, but his home is at Long Sault Rapids on Rainy River. He has two wives and a moderately comfortable house, with a large and very productive garden attached to it.

"Pawawsin" (which may be translated as "Light-before-the-day") is chief of the North-West Angle Indians.

"Maminwabeaskung" (meaning "something always driven backward and forward") is chief of Big Island Lake. This last mentioned chief (whose name I shall not repeat again, as it will doubtless be easily remembered) was accompanied by one of his warriors, who once rejoiced in a name which was possibly as great an outrage on spoken language as is that of his chief, but be that as it may, it will be lost to posterity, for he has so long been known as

Garnet Wolseley that he is no longer known even among his own people by any other cognomen. When Sir Garnet Wolseley was at Fort Francis this red-skinned warrior was greatly taken by his peculiarly martial bearing, and practised his walk till he was able to make a pretty fair imitation of it. Some of the volunteers noticing this, nick-named him after the distinguished white warrior, and he was so pleased with it that he at once adopted the new name, and with it the military walk of his great namesake, and he has stuck pertinaciously to both ever since.

"Kataytaypowocoots" (which is best rendered in English by "Floating Lily") is chief of "Aasabaskasang." This chief does not write his name and post-office address any oftener than is absolutely necessary. No autograph hunters need apply.

"Kitchakakah" (Big Hawk) is chief of the red men at Manitou Rapids, on Rainy River. He was not picturesquely painted, and his dress was rather scanty, but among white men he enjoys the reputation of being the worst tempered and most "cantankerous" Indian in all the North-West.

"The falls of Winnipeg River" is a term of rather broad signification, as there are many falls and rapids in that swift-flowing and at times very turbulent stream, but at Rat Portage the term applies to the falls in the east and west branches of the river, both of which cross the line of the Canada Pacific Railway within a comparatively short distance of this place. Of the falls in the west branch there is little to say. They might better be termed very wild-looking rapids than "falls," as the latter term wholly misleads one regarding them. The falls on the east branch, however, are genuine in their character. They are called the "Kabakitchowan Falls."

This name may be translated as "high, or steep rock" falls. The occasion of my visit to this charmingly picturesque little water fall must have been peculiarly well timed for seeing it at its best. I took the advice of a friend, who said, "If you want to see the Kabakitchowan Falls as you should, go there just after the sun is down." The sun had just sunk below the horizon as I made my way toward the fall in a small Rice Lake canoe, and soon after I had passed the abutments that have stood waiting for an iron railway bridge ever since last winter it was apparent that the channel of the east branch of the Winnipeg was speedily becoming narrow and swift. There was not a ripple near the middle of the river, and only here and there along the shore could one see the little crystal-crested "rips" that told with what race-horse speed the glossy stream was rushing past some tiny reef that jutted out from the rocky shore. Landing just where a deeply-worn path led up the wooded ridge beside the narrow gorge through which the river rushes to the cataract, I had soon reached a spot overlooking one of the most romantic and beautiful pictures that the rugged Laurentides afford. The fall is not more than about eighteen feet high, and there is comparatively little commotion in the water at its base. It is as if the heavy volume pouring down through the narrow, funnel-like gorge dropped into a fathomless basin, where there were no sunken rocks to break and hurl upward the swift plunging torrent in foaming, broken waves to the surface again. The sweep of the fall, or if

I might use the term, the "curve of the apron" is very peculiar. Though this river is comparatively wide where it is to be crossed by the railway, it narrows rapidly till it is confined between the walls of a rocky chasm, and it is just where it shoots through the narrowest pass that it rushes down the precipice. Niagara drops over the escarpment with a terrible roar, and though it gives one an idea of immense power it is rather of a passive force born of its giant weight than an active aggressive strength. With Montmorency it is much the same. The river tumbles down through the rapids, reaches the brow of a dizzy precipice, and breaking into a foaming mass falls in a fleecy, feathery veil to the black, foam-flecked flood below. But the Kabakitchowan is a cataract of an entirely different order. Here is no passive, but an aggressive power. The river does not roll through the gorge and fall over the escarpment. It rushes forcibly through the narrow, rock-bound pass, and with a grand forward leap *plunges* into the dark flood below. It was no broken sheet of foam that I saw pouring through the gorge and over the water-worn ledge, but a shining, translucent volume, fringed with fleecy foam and spray at the borders, but in the centre lit up with the lurid tints of the sunset sky, which it flung back mellowed with ruby and deep-hued rose colours. The lovely tints of sky and water contrasting with the variegated greens of the foliage-covered walls of the ravine, the rugged crags of steel-grey rock scowling sullenly from out the rich black green curtains of spruce, the grand sweep of the lofty walls of the chasm, all set word painting at naught. It is in gazing on such a scene that one feels how miserably language fails to crystallize the rapturous but evanescent dreams of beauty that riot through the brain.

A DOG FEAST.

As already intimated, the Indians had made up their minds to have a dog feast yesterday, and they were not deterred from doing so by the fact that they were disappointed in the early departure of His Excellency. The Ojibways have so many feasts, dances, and other ceremonies incident to their pagan belief that it is often very difficult for a stranger to make out just what a given ceremony happens to be about. I was somewhat mystified as to what particular purpose the feast of yesterday was intended to serve. Their great feast of the year, or as their fashionable white sisters would put it, "the event of the season," is always the "White dog feast." Yesterday, however, dogs of any colour answered their purpose. I have heard a great deal about these feasts, and possibly before I shall have finished this tour through the North-West I may be in a position to give some more definite and reliable information regarding these feasts than is now attainable, but for the present I shall describe the doings at the feast yesterday just as they would present themselves to a spectator.

About two hundred able-bodied men were collected on a little point which constitutes the favourite camping ground at the Narrows, and of course this would represent a total population present of probably not less than 500 souls. There were no less than eighteen chiefs present, and altogether, there

was a large and fashionable gathering. Four dogs were selected to be sacrificed—two black, one yellow, and one a sort of grizzled black with white breast and paws. A large circle was formed, containing some 80 or 100 men, and within this sat Mawindobeneesse in state. Not far from where he sat were two Indian drums with about ten players for each. Behind these sat several squaws assisting in the singing, which was carried on vigorously from time to time. One after another the wretched looking dogs, with their front legs tied up to their throats with thongs of bark, were brought in and thrown down before the Great Chief for his approval. It appeared that each one passed examination successfully, if not to his own entire satisfaction, for as Mawindobeneesse nodded and grunted over each he was taken out and killed with one of those fancifully-finished Indian clubs. As soon as a dog was killed he was thrown on a fire outside the circle and allowed to remain there till all his hair was burned off, and the hide charred and rolled up in black, crisp wrinkles. He was then taken off the fire, his entrails removed, and the carcase with the charred skin remaining on it cut up in pieces and thrown into a large camp kettle to boil. As soon as the first dog had been cooked the meat was fished out of the kettle, put into a pail, and carried into the ring along with some very indifferent preparation, called by courtesy "bread" among the red men, but very closely resembling what the *voyageurs* used to call "death balls." When all this had been done Mawindobeneesse selected two rather fashionably attired, "airy" looking young pagans, whose principal habiliments consisted of breech clouts, and girdles of eagle feathers, and placed them at what was supposed to be the entrances on opposite sides of the circle. The medicine man then approached the pail of meat and dish of bread, and after bowing himself almost to the ground over them several times, he danced around them to the music of the drums. After this the "death balls" and dog meat were passed around, but before anybody had tasted his portion the medicine man went to each doorkeeper, and breaking a piece off each one's bread fed it to him. The doorkeepers then danced around the food that was left in the dishes, and then went around to the chiefs, feeding each with his own bread or meat, just as they had been fed by the medicine man. The feast was now fairly begun, and eating and dancing became general. After a time the dog soup, or the water in which the dog had been boiled, was brought in and served out, most of the men and women drinking it with the keenest relish. It was a noticeable fact, however, that some of the younger members of the band, both male and female, declined to taste either the dog meat or dog soup. There were only a very few, however, even among the young people, who appeared to be at all fastidious about it.

CHAPTER IX.

FROM RAT PORTAGE TO THE CITY OF WINNIPEG—RAILWAY TRAVELLING UNDER DIFFICULTIES—WINNIPEG AND WHAT IS TO BE LEARNED AND SEEN THERE—MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT AND EDEN REVIVED—"A BEAUTIFUL CITY ON THE PRAIRIE" WHICH DOES NOT EXIST—MRS. MACKENZIE BOWELL RIDES IN A LOCOMOTIVE—CROSSING A SINK HOLE—WINNIPEG—LIVING IN TENTS—REAL ESTATE SALES—LORD LORNE'S RECEPTION—A BUSY PLACE.

WINNIPEG, Aug. 6.—Leaving Rat Portage on the evening of the 1st inst. I was taken by canoe to a point on the Canada Pacific Railway, about three miles west of the village, and nearly opposite to Mather & Co.'s handsome saw-mill. After waiting there for about an hour and a half I had the satisfaction of seeing Mrs. Mackenzie Böwell (who was also starting for Winnipeg), seated in a hand car along with our baggage, and whirled away down the track about a mile and a half to where we were to meet a construction train. Arrived at the spot, which was just at the edge of a cutting, we had to wait about an hour before the train came along, and the mosquitoes were uncommonly active. Darkness came along before the train did, but at last a loud, shrill whistle announced the approach of the locomotive, and in a few seconds more on she came pushing thirty flat cars loaded with gravel ahead of her. The cars were none of them very heavily loaded, and with the aid of a gravel plough and a steel wire cable the ballast was quickly transferred from the flats to the fill. We were then invited to take seats in the driver's cab, and a run to Ostrasund was made at a rattling pace. It was the first time Mrs. Böwell had ever ridden on a locomotive, and it was the first locomotive that had ever carried a Cabinet Minister's wife. After waiting for about an hour at Ostrasund we stepped into the cab of another locomotive, which took us to Deception, where Mrs. Böwell was met by Mr. Collingwood Schrieber and escorted to the residence of Mr. Haney, where she was comfortably housed for the night. Next morning a special train consisting of a locomotive and one passenger coach left Deception at a very early hour, in order, if possible, to connect with the regular train at Cross Lake. About half the distance had been traversed, when arriving at a way station, we were informed that a sink hole had been developed in a piece of particularly soft muskeg since the evening before. At six o'clock on Monday night the rails at this point had been two feet above water, but that morning the water was found to be two feet above the rails. To meet this difficulty Mr. Schrieber sent a despatch to Cross Lake ordering a locomotive to meet us at the opposite side of the sink hole. Our locomotive was then put behind the passenger coach which it shoved slowly toward the damaged spot of the track. Only about three rail lengths had gone down below the grade, but those had sunk so low that it looked as though it would be an impossibility to get the coach over them.

While Mr. Schrieber and the train officials were inspecting the place the locomotive from Cross Lake arrived, pushing in front of it two flat cars. The flats were pushed slowly and cautiously down into the water and up the opposite side, until the buffer of the foremost reached that of the passenger coach. Then a start was made, and the coach towed very slowly and cautiously through the sink-hole, which by this time was so deep that the trucks were almost entirely submerged. Notwithstanding the delay thus caused, the special caught the regular train at Cross Lake, and the latter reached this city at a few minutes after three in the afternoon.

From Cross Lake to White Mouth River there is but little to attract the traveller. In the passage the line bids farewell to the Laurentides, and strikes through a heavy belt of swamp, which, were it in many portions of Ontario, would doubtless be cleared, drained, and rendered valuable; but here, where there are limitless tracts that are almost ready for settlement, it is questionable if this region will be rendered productive before several generations shall have passed away. As the line nears Selkirk the country improves very materially in character, and from Selkirk to Winnipeg rich flats spread out away on either hand. Just now these flats are dry and look fit to grow any cereals, but last year, I am told, they were entirely submerged.

Winnipeg has been written of so often and so fully that it might be difficult to say anything new concerning it. It is more like Chicago than any city I know, notwithstanding the great difference in the dimensions and population of the two. I have seen very few unemployed people here, and they were invariably drunk. In fact I have seen some drunken people in Winnipeg who were not out of employment. I should be very sorry to have any unemployed young man in old Canada conclude from what I have said just here that Winnipeg is a haven for all who cannot find work elsewhere. I am not sure that young men would do particularly well in looking up work here. The reason there are very few unemployed people here is that those who are out of work cannot afford to live here. It costs them too much. Everything is costly in Winnipeg just now, and because city property is proportionately high many people say that a great crash in the real estate market here is not far off. Be this as it may, Winnipeg is thriving just now. The hotels are numerous, charge high rates, and do not give one more than very moderate value for his money, and yet they are nearly all over-crowded. I have not seen the sign "to let" since I came here, but, on the other hand, there must be over hundreds of tents pitched within the city limits and most of them are occupied by families.

"MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT" AND "EDEN" REVIVED.

Scarcely an evening passes that there are not one or more auction sales of real estate. Sometimes it is of city property, sometimes suburban claims recently divided into city lots, and frequently it is a sale of lots in some remote city on the plains which is as yet, only in existence on paper. A few nights ago an auction sale of the latter class of property was being carried on

with very fair success. The map, handsomely traced and elaborately coloured, showed the streets, avenues, business localities and suburban villa lots, together with a very liberal reserve for railway station, freight sheds, guard rooms, &c., &c.

Just as business was booming and the auctioneer feeling that he had accomplished a pronounced success, an axeman from the C. P. R., dusty, dirty, and rough, came staggering through the crowd, looked at the map, read the name of the city, and then remarked :—"I came through that town just five days ago, and there wasn't a house, a street, or even a stake. It was just a bit of level prairie, with no bush in sight, and nobody knows whether the railway will ever go near it or not."

Nobody pretended to believe the drunken axeman, but the bidding stopped for all that, and not another foot of property in that paper city changed hands that night.

WINNIPEG'S GENERAL APPEARANCE.

It would take a long time to describe the general appearance of Winnipeg, and even then the reader who had never seen this Canadian Chicago might have a very vague and indefinite notion as to what manner of place it really is. In the first place their main street which is by a long way the principal thoroughfare of the city, is a very broad avenue (two chains wide). It is almost as level as a billiard table, but by no means straight. It was once the old Hudson Bay trail, and it makes some sort of a mild pretence of following the trend of the west bank of Red River. The other streets are running nearly north and south or east and west, and these forming all sorts of angles with the somewhat tortuous main street, give rise to an unheard of number of gores and angles. Some of the inhabitants have faced the situation boldly, and building their houses in a regular rectangular form have left some curious little corners in their areas and lawns, while others have attempted to accommodate their houses to the shape of their lots. Whether or not they have gone still further, and have had their furniture made on the bias, I am not prepared to say, but I am very certain that unless some of them have done so, there must be a very appreciable amount of waste space in their domiciles.

LORD LORNE'S RECEPTION.

On arriving on Saturday night, His Excellency and party went straightway to Silver Heights, which had been very handsomely fitted up for them by Donald A. Smith. Unfortunately just about the time of Lord Lorne's arrival, a telegram brought the melancholy announcement that Mrs. Smith was dangerously ill in the old country, and of course Mr. Smith was obliged to hurry away.

The Winnipeg welcome to His Excellency was very enthusiastic, but the decorations fell considerably short of what I had been led to expect. One of the mottoes at least was extremely silly, a "cheap and nasty" advertisement of some sort of a dry goods or grocery house. The arches were both rather pretty, but that is about the best that can be said of the decorations.

An address by the civic authorities was presented to His Excellency and appropriately responded to.

On Tuesday His Excellency and some of his party attended a picnic at Bird's Hill, which was given by the members of the Local Government. Later in the afternoon they waited for some time to witness the launch of the steamer *Princess*, but she caught on the ways, and delayed the ceremony so long that the distinguished visitors were obliged to leave before it had been concluded. In the evening His Excellency attended a banquet given in his honour by Lieutenant-Governor Cauchon.

On Wednesday, the civic holiday, His Excellency and suite attended a cricket match at Dufferin Park, and the Caledonian games at the racecourse. While in the racecourse His Excellency was presented with an address by the St. Andrew's Society, to which he replied.

On Thursday afternoon His Excellency and suite attended a garden party at Government House, where they were met by the Chancellor and members of the University of Manitoba, by whom an address was presented, and the usual reply given. In the evening His Excellency gave a dinner party at Silver Heights.

On Friday Lord Lorne visited the Penitentiary at Stony Mountain, and the Historical Society's rooms at Winnipeg.

On Saturday (to-day) His Excellency visited St. Mary's Academy at Winnipeg, the Archbishop's Palace, the Orphanage of the Grey Nuns, and the College at St. Boniface in the forenoon, and went to Emerson in the afternoon.

CHAPTER X.

FROM WINNIPEG TO PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE—SECOND STAGE OF THE JOURNEY—STONY MOUNTAIN AND THE CHARACTER OF THE SOIL—THE SCENE PRESENTED AT THE PORTAGE—INCIDENTS OF THE RECEPTION—A GLIMPSE OF THE BUFFALO—MANITOBA'S SYSTEM OF DRAINAGE.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S CAMP,
Seven miles beyond End of Track, on C. P. R., Aug 8.

The first stage of Lord Lorne's journey from the Capital to the Rocky Mountains may be said to have ended at Winnipeg, and this might count as the first day's journey on the second stage. This morning there was a good deal of hurry and bustle about the C. P. R. station, as notwithstanding the fact that a large share of the total outfit had been forwarded on Saturday, there were still several cases and packages, besides three pairs of horses, going

upon the special which was to leave at half-past nine. There was a large crowd at the station to see the Vice-Regal party away, the local troop of cavalry furnishing the guard of honour, while a salute of twenty-one guns was fired by the artillery company, the field pieces used being stationed only a short distance from the track.

The Vice-Regal party consisted of His Excellency the Governor-General, Lieut.-Col. De Winton, secretary; Capt. Chater, A.D.C.; Capt. Percival, A.D.C.; Capt. Bagot, comptroller; Rev. Dr. McGregor, of St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh; Mr. Sidney Hall, of the *London Graphic*; Mr. Charles Austin, of the *Times*; and Dr. Sewell, of Quebec.

Mr. Campbell, the Governor-General's short-hand writer, is also with the party, but he does not intend to go farther west than Rapid City.

Lord Lorne is accompanied by five servants, which, of course, does not include guides or any people especially engaged for the journey. Mr. Elliott Galt, of the Indian Department, goes along in his official capacity. The special train, which was in the care of Mr. Stickney, of the C. P. R., carried several people who were not making the journey with the Governor-General. Some of these were going to the end of the track to see His Excellency fairly on his way, while others were also contemplating a trip across the plains. On the train were the Hon. J. Norquay; Mr. Campbell, of the Hudson Bay Company (formerly chief factor of the Swan River District); Capt. Thomas Howard, of Winnipeg, who will accompany the party as far as Fort Ellis; Mr. McFarlane, of the Edinburgh *Scotsman*, who is about to make a somewhat extended trip upon the plains. He will be cared for by Mr. Clay, who acts for the C. P. R. Syndicate in the matter.

At ten minutes past ten the train moved off from the station at Winnipeg, the clanging of the bell and even the shrill scream of the whistle being well nigh drowned by the deafening cheers of the crowd.

Stony Mountain was the first point of interest passed after leaving Winnipeg. This "mountain," as it is called here, would escape unnoticed in Ontario or Quebec, unless, indeed, it might be in the Laurentides or the Eastern Townships, and there it would pass for a "low-lying flat." It is in reality a limestone ridge, about forty or fifty feet above the level of the surrounding prairie. It contains, I believe, a very fair limestone quarry, but is composed chiefly of light soil and gravel. It is about twelve miles from Winnipeg, and furnishes the city with stone, gravel, and sand, all of which are very much needed there. There is also an almost unlimited supply of gravel at Bird's Hill, which is seven miles north of Winnipeg, and close to the line of the Thunder Bay division of the C. P. R.

Between Winnipeg and Stony Mountain the railway runs through an almost unbroken level of prairie land, much of which was last year submerged, but all of which now appears dry enough for any sort of products. Of course this is greatly attributable to the fact that the present is an exceptionally dry season, but it is doubtless in some measure due to drainage. While in Winnipeg I was driven out to the end of the grade on the Manitoba and South-Western Colonization Railway—which, by the way, is being pushed

forward by the contractor, Mr. P. J. Brown, with remarkable energy—and there I saw an immense ditch (not quite as large as the Erie Canal, but big enough to suggest the comparison), which, as far as I could see, did not contain a drop of water. Last year that same locality was covered with about eighteen inches or two feet of water. The same thing was told me by Mr. Schreiber of the country through which the C. P. R. runs between Selkirk and Winnipeg. Last year a great deal of it was under two feet of water; this year it is as dry as the most fastidious settler could wish it. The Hon. Mr. Norquay (to whom I am much indebted for information regarding the land, and of the brilliant possibilities especially of the Province of which he is Premier) informs me that by the end of the current season Manitoba will have completed some 150 miles of public drains, all of which are doing excellent service.

GLIMPSE OF GENUINE BUFFALOES.

Just as the train was nearing Stony Mountain a herd of buffaloes and domestic cattle were observed feeding close beside the track. These buffaloes are not melancholy, mangy-looking brutes, such as have been shown through Ontario at different times, but hearty, vigorous looking animals, fat, sleek, and in every way respectable representatives of the bison family. They are the property of the warden of the penitentiary (which is located on Stony Mountain, close by the railway). Their owner has tried the experiment of crossing them with the domestic cattle, and so far the results have proved very satisfactory. It would seem, however, that in the course of a few crosses the buffalo characteristics would probably disappear. The half-breed calves of this herd show much more of the domestic than of the bison peculiarities.

West of Stony Mountain the road continues through a rich-looking, though somewhat low-lying flat for some miles, and indeed the whole country all the way to Portage La Prairie is occasionally varied with low poplar ridges. As nearly as I could judge, with, perhaps, the exception of the very narrow ridge occupied by Stony Mountain, there is not a fraction of the sixty miles traversed by the C. P. R. between Winnipeg and Portage La Prairie which is not eminently suitable for farming purposes. Of course there are places that are now too wet to be of any use, but these are all thoroughly susceptible of drainage, and when adequately drained they will doubtless prove exceptionally productive. The soil is a very thick stratum of rich black loam, overlying a light coloured clay, often mixed with fine stone gravel and a sand of a light shade, containing in itself more or less lime. I have no doubt. As to the productiveness of the tillable portions of Manitoba, I have no need to say anything to Ontario readers as they have seen abundant proof of their richness in the Manitoba exhibits at our fairs and elsewhere. At Portage La Prairie there was a very large crowd in waiting to meet the train. The assembly was made up of both white people and red, but the former largely outnumbered the latter. This town, of all its sisters, is second in Manitoba to Winnipeg in population and importance. It is growing very rapidly, and appears located in the very heart of an excellent farming country.

There were two bands of Indians waiting here, but they kept aloof from each other, and occupied opposite sides of the railway. On the north side were a large number of Sioux, most of whom were hideously painted, and many gorgeously dressed. Some of the men sat on lachrymose-looking, cut-haired ponies. All these ponies, like the lotus-eaters, were "mild-eyed" and "melancholy," but only a very few of them looked as though they were in the habit of eating anything, much less the consumption of an article of diet supposed to have an influence on their character, and which would be nearly, or quite, unobtainable in the North-West, and, besides this, I never yet saw an Indian pony that needed a sedative. As a rule they are not at all apt to disturb themselves unnecessarily. These ponies were decked out with bright tassels at the throat, scarlet saddle-cloths, deer-skin saddles elaborately ornamented with bead work, and all-in-all, despite the wretched condition and contemptible dimensions of the ponies, they, with their riders, made a most striking appearance as they were gathered in picturesque groups in the tall grass, on a little bluff not more than a hundred yards from the train. The squaws, children, and old men were hanging about the carts or squatting on the ground close beside the track and a rather squalid looking lot they were, though I am informed that between trapping, fishing, farming, and "working out," these people manage to live more comfortably than the majority of Indians. I am also told that nearly all, if not indeed all, the older of these Indians were concerned in the terrible Minnesota massacre. They were not at all calculated to impress one favourably at all events. They had an arrogant swagger, especially those on horseback, that had infinitely more of impudence and very much less dignified repose than is usually noticeable among the Ojibway braves. An Ojibway may even beg and be very much in earnest about it, but there is withal an assumption of serene and solemn dignity about him which though quite unobtrusive, can hardly escape the notice of the most careless observer. The manner of the Sioux seemed to say, "We are the superior race and we want you to know it." The manner of the Ojibway says, "We are quite sure of our position; you are very good people and if you imagine you are our superiors we see no reason why you should not amuse yourself with such an assumption; we can well afford to utterly ignore any such childish comparisons." On the south side stood a small band of Ojibways. They kept aloof from the crowd altogether and only spoke to those who approached them and opened the conversation. One of the visitors asked through the interpreter if the Ojibways ever intermarried with the Sioux. It would be impossible to describe the utter contempt which showed itself in the Ojibway's face as the question was repeated to him. There was no anger or even irritation apparent in his reply, but he spoke with the air of one who sincerely commiserated the profound ignorance of the questioner, and what he said could be better translated by tone and gesture than by words. "Oh! certainly not" would not be strong enough, but still it comes nearer than any words into which I can put his answer.

The white inhabitants of Portage la Prairie presented a loyal address to His Excellency, in which they hoped that this visit to the North-West would have many pleasant reminiscences.

His Excellency replied to the address *extempore*, thanking the citizens for the cordiality of his reception, and expressing his regret that a longer stay with them was prevented by the shortness of the time at his disposal, which necessitated his pushing on in order to see as much of the Western country as possible.

CHAPTER XI.

WESTWARD FROM THE END OF THE CANADA PACIFIC—DESCRIPTION OF THE CAVALCADE.—LORD LORNE LAYS A RAIL ON THE GREAT ROAD—OVER THE GREAT PLAINS—OUT INTO THE GREAT NORTH-WEST—THE COUNTRY TRAVERSED—SPLENDID LANDS HELD BY SPECULATORS.

IN CAMPION BIG PLAINS, Manitoba, Aug. 9.—The last instalment of my journal closed with the ceremonies at Portage la Prairie. As soon as the programme had been gone through with, the Vice-Regal party took the train once more, and a run of about thirty-five miles brought them to the end of the track, or at least very near the end of it, where in an open space the whole outfit that was to convey the party over the plains was awaiting them. The array was a decidedly imposing one. There were in all fifty-eight horses, besides the pair which I had purchased for the journey. The vehicles for the conveyance of the Governor-General and suite consisted of three light covered ambulances, each capable of carrying comfortably five people besides the driver. Each ambulance was drawn by four horses, driven by a member of the Mounted Police Force. After the ambulances came four baggage waggons, each drawn by four horses, and the rest of the cavalcade was made up of the three two-horse buckboards and several spring and lumber waggons, each drawn by two horses. The whole turnout was in command of Colonel Herchmer, who rode a handsome bay at the head of the column, Sergeant Dunn bringing up the rear on a stalwart rangy-looking, dark chestnut. The horses were all in prime condition, and as the bright sunlight glistened on their shining coats and the glistening brass mountings of the harness, and lit up the bright scarlet tunics and snowy helmets of the officers and men against the silver-green of the furze-grown patch of prairie where they were gathered, and the deeper shades of the spruce and poplar that enclosed it, the scene was a striking and beautiful one.

The process of unloading the baggage car occupied some time, and while it was being got along with, His Excellency, Dr. McGregor, Colonel De Win-

ton, Hon. Mr. Norquay, and one or two others stepped aboard the locomotive and proceeded to the extreme end of the track, where His Excellency and Mr. Norquay laid a rail on the C. P. R.

Only about five miles progress was made on our westward way after leaving the end of the track this evening, but the camp was fully two miles off the trail. The road lay through a section of country abounding in low sandy ridges and little copses or clumps of poplars scattered about in sufficient numbers to deprive the region of much of that open boundless look which one is apt to look for in a prairie region. The soil, I should say, would be productive, or at least fairly productive, though not so rich as the black loam generally prevalent all the way from Winnipeg to the end of the track.

Our camp to-night is rather prettily located, though the prevalence of prairie-furze is against it in many respects. In the first place it affords an admirable harbour for mosquitoes, besides being undesirable for tent floors. It was also unfortunate that we had to camp so far from the trail as it involves some four miles extra driving, but I am told this is the only place that could be conveniently reached to-night where good grass and water were both obtainable. As yet I have not had time to learn much that would be of interest concerning the "outfit" furnished by the Mounted Police for the transport of His Excellency, but I shall have opportunities of doing so as we go along.

GETTING OUT INTO THE PLAIN.

After having become partially accustomed to the luxurious camps provided by the contractors on Section B, it was not altogether pleasant turning out of my little bell tent this morning and tramping about in the dewy grass to assist my half-breed in getting ready for a start from our first-camp. It did not take long to get over the first chill, however, and then I was comfortable enough physically, but it did not take many minutes to discover that my half-breed "guide" (as I may call him for want of a better term) was likely to be of but little use to me. He was slow and awkward. He cannot pitch a tent properly. He does not know how to harness horses decently, is an atrociously bad cook, and all in all, for a man who is willing to work at all, he is about as useless a youth as could be devised. Perhaps, however, I am judging hastily, and as he is by no means the only unsatisfactory feature in my outfit, I shall not commit myself too strongly on the subject for a day or two. The first four or five miles travelling to-day was through sandy valleys and over low sand ridges, with here and there a little pond or lakelet, and numerous clumps of scrub oak and poplar. The soil, though very far from sterile, is of course not nearly as rich as the prevailing black mould. It would, were it in any of the older counties in Ontario, very soon be converted into a prosperous farming region. The worst that can be said of it is that the soil is light. After passing out of this strip of sand (which, with what we traversed of it last night and this morning amounts probably to eight or nine miles) the trail struck the section of country known as the "Big Plains." All the remainder of the day we have been travelling over the Big Plains and we have not yet reached the end of them, for they are about thirty miles wide. On

the way we have passed close to a number of farms bearing magnificent crops of wheat and oats, and we have sighted a large number of farm houses which were not near enough to the trail to afford an opportunity of judging as to the quality of the farms to which they belong, but from the fact that since reaching this immense stretch of comparatively level prairie I have seen no soil upturned except the richest and strongest of black loam, I should feel safe in coming to the conclusion that the grand looking farms lying close to the trail only fairly represent the average of the whole region. It would be difficult to represent to a farmer who has never seen some of these rich prairie regions what a farm in the Big Plains means. He can picture to himself a farm almost as smooth and level as a billiard table, every foot of which was not only cleared and ready for the plough, but extraordinarily rich at that. Of course the want of timber is a fault which practical farmers will not readily overlook, but within sight are the Riding Mountains, where there is a large supply of spruce, poplar, and scrub oak. Here are very few "sloughs" (pronounced here "slews") to drain, and the difficulties in the way of draining them are not at all formidable. On the Big Plains, however, it will be some time before the farmers will have much occasion to do any draining, as it will take some years to break up the immense stretches of choice farming land here that are now ready for the plough.

The Governor-General's camp to-night is on the west bank of a little marshy stream, which is almost as much slough as stream. His Excellency and suite are furthest from the trail and to the north of it; then in a long row on the west of it and extending out to the trail are the waggons of the expedition, and then come the police tents, with Col. Herchmer nearest the trail and my own pitched within a few yards of it. Game is abundant here, and nearly every one in the Governor-General's party has had more or less sport. A few hundred yards south of the trail the stream, which is easily fordable at the crossing, opens out into a large pool with low sedgy banks. Just after sunset to-night Capt. Percival and myself took our stations on opposite sides of this pool and amused ourselves with shooting ducks on the wing till we were fairly tired of it. Green-winged teal are very plentiful. American widgeon, mallard, and other varieties are to be met with in nearly every pool. Yellow-legged plover grow to an unusual size here.

CHAPTER XII.

SECTION AT RAPID CITY—A FINE FARMING COUNTRY—HOW WINNIPEG MERCHANTS
BEAT TRAVELLERS—THE LITTLE SASKATCHEWAN AND ITS WATER-POWER—SALT LAKE—
THE COUNTRY AROUND—SHOAL LAKE—THE WATER ON THE PLAINS.

RAPID CITY, MANITOBA, August 10.—Not having a hard journey to make to-day, His Excellency's cavalcade was not on the move this morning till about seven o'clock. It had at length been definitely decided upon to leave Brandon out on the westward journey, but include it among the stopping-places on the return. This brought the party to Rapid City a day ahead of time, but as Mr. C. J. Whelms, of that place, met Colonel De Winton on the prairie yesterday forenoon, he hurried back to the village to inform the people, in order that they might not be wholly unprepared to receive His Excellency to-day.

Our camp of last night was not far from the western edge of Big Plains. On leaving Big Plains, we entered what is known as the Little Saskatchewan country. Here the prairie is just a trifle more undulating, and it is frequently broken with low poplar bluffs and occasional ponds or sloughs. I should hardly use the term "bluff" without some explanation as to its local signification. The smallest clump of trees or bushes on the prairie is called a "bluff." These bluffs are greatly sought for and prized by those who have to camp in the plains in the winter, or after the weather becomes cool in the latter part of summer and fall.

In reaching this village to-day we had some pretty tough mud holes to pull through, and in the worst of these I met with my first break-down. The new buckboard, for which I had paid an extravagant price in Winnipeg, proved unequal to the strain. One of the mares wrenched a new shoe off, and the other loosened one of hers, but for all this they managed to land both my load and myself on the west side of the slough without so much as halting. As I was not far from the village at the time, it did not take me long to sufficiently repair the damage to admit of my moving on, though the break-down was one of a very serious nature. In fact I begin to see that in nearly every purchase I made in Winnipeg I was swindled to a greater or less extent. My buckboard, which was a high-priced one, is not at all as represented, and so entirely indifferent was the manufacturer as to how it would serve my purpose, as soon as it was fairly off his hands, that he furnished it with a wrench that would not fit the nuts that required to be removed at last once every twenty-four hours. To-day I had to spend enough in repairing and reironing the pole to have paid for two poles out and out in Ontario, and altogether the vehicle is very far from being as strong as I had been led to believe it was. The furnishing of the rest of my outfit (wherever,

I was unable to give it my personal supervision) has been of the same character. I trusted a very respectable firm of Winnipeg grocers to put up a small case of supplies for me, and I find on opening the box and examining the contents that the lime juice put up for me is at least half water. I paid for a bell tent that was to be complete and suitable for the trip to the Rocky Mountains and return, and I particularly stipulated that it was to be furnished with pole and pegs. When I came to have it pitched I found that it had not been furnished with pegs, and that there was nothing in the shape of a wall or curtain attached to it. After borrowing pegs with which to pitch it, I found that it was merely a shed, leaving a space of nearly ten inches open between the lower edge and the ground. Such a tent might do well enough for an awning in hot weather, but in order to make it adaptable to my purposes I shall have to pay out about half as much as it cost me for the necessary attachments. These are only samples of the way in which anyone obliged to buy an outfit in Winnipeg is liable to imposition. Tradesmen never expect to see the same customer back again, and they take the opportunity afforded them of squeezing him to the utmost. Anyone intending to make the trip across the plains would do well to buy everything he requires for it in Ontario before leaving, as that is the only way he can be sure of securing a suitable outfit at any price.

Rapid City is as yet scarcely as pretentious a place as its name would indicate. It is indeed only a small hamlet in the valley of the Little Saskatchewan. The village, small as it is, however, is built on both sides of the stream which is spanned by a narrow and very rickety bridge. A new bridge is now building, however, which when completed will doubtless be much more in keeping with the progressive character of the place. Rapid City itself is not a pretty place by any means. The few streets of which it boasts are uneven and irregular, and the houses are neither beautiful nor picturesque, while as yet no one appears to have had time to do anything in the way of beautifying his place even to the very small extent of fencing in a front-yard. Prices are very high, as might be expected, and to any unfortunate traveller who happens to require anything to be had here they are, I believe, doubly so. In fact I am inclined to think that the people both of Winnipeg and the rest of Manitoba are rather overdoing this matter of overcharging. It is of course, all right for a man to get the best price obtainable for anything he has to sell, but this business of gauging one's prices according to the necessities of one's customer is mean and unbusiness-like. Of course I do not mean to say that all with whom I have dealt with in Winnipeg and the North-West are in the habit of doing this.

A FINE FARMING COUNTRY.

Undoubtedly the strong point about Rapid City is the fine farming country, in the midst of which it is located. The little Saskatchewan is a deep, swift, and narrow stream, and I am informed that a dam could be built at very moderate cost which would furnish all the water-power necessary to drive a large amount of manufacturing and milling machinery right in the heart of

the village. I give the statement as it was given to me, but I am of opinion that it is somewhat overstated. The stream is doubtless a swift one, and even now in low water it is carrying a heavy volume down to the Assiniboine (the "Little" Saskatchewan must not be confounded with the other rivers similarly named, and which flow through the great Saskatchewan directly into Lake Winnipeg), but I question if there is fall enough just here to afford power for any extensive mills or factories. A few miles down the river, however, there are said to be falls and an undeniably good water privilege, and though I have not seen them, I am quite prepared to accept the statement as correct.

In approaching Rapid City from the east the traveller cannot fail to be impressed with the charming picture presented; as he catches his first glimpse of the beautiful valley of the Little Saskatchewan. After having traversed some sixty or seventy miles of comparatively level prairie, he approaches the verge of what he takes for an ordinary prairie bluff, but as he reaches the crest a never-to-be-forgotten surprise awaits him.

Let the reader imagine spread out before him, resplendent in the mellow russet and golden glory of an August afternoon, not merely a few square miles, but township after township in the far-reaching slopes of a fertile valley, whose far-off rim rises sharp and treeless against the soft blue of a summer's sky, while, as if in prophetic mimicry of a glorious future, the ripe and green prairie grasses that are waving in the sunlight display all the varied green and gold and orange shades of growing, ripening, and ripened grain. From out that little clump of shrubbery, one almost expects to see rising the weather-stained gable of an old-fashioned farm-house, just as he expects to see the dust rolling up as if from a public highway along that line of white poplars that look as though they had been planted by a roadside, but still the traveller looks in vain for such evidences of man's presence in these lonely slopes. The untrimmed hedges, the orchards, the fields of waving grain are all delusive pictures, these slopes are still as they were turned out of Nature's hands, but who can tell how soon the prophetic panorama of this bright August afternoon may become a grand reality, when hundreds of white-walled homesteads may dot these lovely fertile slopes, and when errant breezes, as they float up the valley, shall shake the nodding heads of golden grain, instead of piping shrilly across these useless stretches of dry and withered grass.

THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S RECEPTION.

The reception at Rapid City was a very hearty one. There was an arch of considerable size, which, in lieu of evergreens, was ornamented with partially ripened grain in the straw and poplar boughs.

After His Excellency had had an opportunity of seeing the decorations that had been put up in honour of his visit, and had paid a visit to the office of the local newspaper (the *Rapid City Standard*), an address was presented to him on behalf of the inhabitants by Col. Martin, to which Lord Lorne replied at considerable length.

There are a number of settlers in the immediate vicinity of Rapid City, though singularly enough few, if any, of their homes are to be seen in looking down into the valley from the trail. The houses which constitute the village are about all that can be seen. Rapid City is only about twenty miles from Brandon, a point on the Assiniboine River, where the C. P. R. is to cross, and where a little town is said to be springing up with astonishing rapidity. The people of Rapid City fully expect to be supplied with railway facilities by one of the very numerous projected branches of the Canadian Pacific Railway, but whether their hopes in that direction should prove well founded or not the splendid country in which they are located can hardly be allowed to remain unopened much longer.

Our camp to-night is about half a mile down the river from the village, and close upon the west bank of the river. A number of the horses have come near being drowned by tumbling into the deep swift current of the river while attempting to drink.

To-morrow we drive to Shoal Lake, forty miles distant, and as this will necessitate a very early start I must try and snatch a little sleep in the meantime.

OVER THE PRAIRIE.

SHOAL LAKE, Aug. 11.—The drive to-day has been a heavy and a fast one, some forty miles having been covered in a little over seven hours' driving time. The country through which we have passed between Rapid City and this point is altogether very fine, and I should think fully 80 per cent. of it is choice land. Some of this 80 per cent. is now a trifle wet to be immediately ready for the plough, but even a larger proportion than that will ultimately be cultivated. To-day we passed some very heavy sloughs, and drove around two or three that were pretty extensive, assuming almost the dimensions of small lakes. In the many windings of the trail to-day the man who was guiding the party lost his way, and finally brought the whole procession to a halt in a farmer's somewhat capacious front yard. The loss of time involved was not serious, however.

The only water to be found along the trail over the prairie is usually very bad, as it comes out of the muddy, semi-stagnant sloughs. It answers for making tea, and by straining the bugs and pollywogs out of it one can manage to swallow it if it happens to be pretty liberally mixed with lime juice. As a rule the horses do not like it; though they soon learn to drink it if they cannot get anything better. As I was driving along this afternoon in advance of the whole party I saw a little bay of clear, limpid water splashing upon a clean, hard beach of sand and gravel. I stopped to give the horses a drink when His Excellency coming up halted his carriage to tell me that the water was alkaline. The policeman who was driving for him had made him aware of the fact, but my astute "guide," William Baillie, knew nothing about it. Of course I stopped the horse's potations at once. Just beyond this bay the trail passed a little wooded point and we were in full view of Salt Lake, which is some three or four miles long and a mile or more wide. The sloughs in this

immediate vicinity are also alkaline. It must not be inferred from what I have said regarding the water supply out here that there is anything radically wrong with it. There are some very decent soft water creeks to be found, and the settlers have no difficulty in reaching good water by sinking wells.

Shoal Lake is not a very inviting place, and as it is storming to-night I am afraid the travellers will not be very favourably impressed with it. The lake from which the hamlet takes its name is rather a pretty sheet of water about five or six miles long. Altogether the country between here and Rapid City is very fine, as I have already stated, but I do not think it would rank quite as high as the country lying east of the latter place. East of the Little Saskatchewan I should say that from 95 to 98 per cent. of the land is thoroughly good. An address was presented by the Shoal Lake people, to which His Excellency made a brief extemporaneous reply.

Lord Lorne and party are the guests of Mr. Dewdney, the Indian Commissioner, to-night.

CHAPTER XIII.

ARRIVAL AT BIRTLE AND RECEPTION—THE LAND STONY, BUT GOOD—EXPERIENCES OF SETTLERS IN THEIR NEW HOMES—THE PRAIRIE MOSQUITO—ARRIVAL AT FORT ELLICE.

SNAKE CREEK, August 12.—Our camp to-night is only four or five miles east of Fort Ellice, but as the crossing of the Assiniboine will in all probability occupy considerable time, it was deemed prudent not to attempt reaching the Fort till to-morrow forenoon. The feature of to-day's journey was unquestionably the visit to Birtle. The country between Shoal Lake and the last-named village is good, though not quite so free from sloughs as might be wished, while the presence of occasional small boulders does not improve the condition of the roads to any extent. On the other hand, however, the settlers aver that farming operations are not at all embarrassed by the quantities of small stones scattered over the prairie, while it is easy to see that there are very few, if any, sloughs within sight of the trail that could not be drained for a very trifling sum.

Birtle is situated in the valley of Bird Tail Creek. It is a new settlement, and a remarkably thriving one. The farmers in this vicinity have been unusually successful, and all appear to be in high spirits over their prospects. Indeed the growth of this place appears to have been most extraordinary. There are farmers in the neighbourhood who have not yet been in their claims a full year who have from thirty to eighty acres already in crop, and I heard of one or two instances where settlers had no less than 100 acres in

crop as the result of the first year's efforts. The crops here are all looking wonderfully well, and altogether the region is a very promising one.

The approach to the valley of Bird Tail Creek, upon the east bank of which the youthful village is prettily situated, is quite as beautiful as that at Rapid City. The landscape on the west bank of Bird Tail Creek is more circumscribed than that of the little Saskatchewan, but as an offset to this the smaller landscape is much more park-like and fuller of charming details than the larger. His Excellency was escorted to the Town Hall and a lengthy but very sensible address was read, in which allusion was made to the fact that the quotation from a letter to a Scottish newspaper which His Excellency had given in a speech to his constituents at Inverary just before his departure for Canada had been written by a citizen of Birtle (one of the Reception Committee, in fact). At the close of the address, or rather as a part of the address itself, the entire audience rose to their feet and sang "God Save the Queen." The effect was singularly dramatic, and could not have failed to impress every one present. In fact, there was a genuineness and even fervent enthusiasm, about the reception at Birtle, which was evidently most gratifying to His Excellency, who replied extemporaneously in the happiest manner.

There is a saw-mill at Birtle, and this year a large quantity of logs (spruce and poplar) were driven down to it from the Riding Mountains. In all, I believe that some 30,000 logs were driven down Bird Tail Creek, but some eight or ten thousand of them were taken all the way down the Assiniboine to be cut at a saw-mill on that stream. I shall probably be unable to visit the Riding Mountains, but some gentlemen who live in and about Birtle inform me that there is a very large supply both of saw-logs and firewood to be cut there. So far nearly all the logs that have been cut there are spruce. These grow to an average of eighteen inches to two feet across the stump, and the lumber cut from them is said to be of good quality. Logs cut in the Riding Mountains can be driven all the way to Winnipeg by water, and, though the drive would be a long one, I do not think it would be at all troublesome. Be this as it may, it is very certain that the Riding Mountains contain a supply of lumber and firewood that cannot be too highly prized by all who are interested in the prosperity and well-being of Western Manitoba. Before a great while, in the natural course of events, the coal fields of the Souris, on the south, and of the Saskatchewan, on the north-west, will, through the intervention of railways, furnish these great fertile plains with cheap fuel, while the completion of the Thunder Bay section of the Canadian Pacific Railway will make the wonderfully rich pineries bordering on Georgian Bay tributary to the wants of Manitoba and the great plains lying west of it, while, should the British Columbia end of the railway be pushed through the mountains to connect with the prairie section, there is no doubt that the giant "Douglas firs" of the Pacific slope would find their way into what will then be the great grain-growing and stock-raising region of the Dominion; but in the meantime the settlers now here and the many thousands that are sure to come in within the next few years will require fuel and lumber to

meet their immediate necessities, and for this purpose the value of the fuel and timber supply of the Riding Mountains cannot be over-estimated.

West of Birtle I could not help thinking the land was more stony than would be quite desirable, though some of the settlers assured me that it was not.

Regarding the features of the country (some seven miles) between Birtle and our present camp at Snake Creek, however, I must say that with the exception of the prevalence of loose stone and small boulders, which I found in considerable numbers in the trail. I cannot see anything about the region which the most fastidious settler could wish otherwise.

Near Stony Creek I met a settler who had formerly been a mechanic living near Stratford, Ont. He rather startled me with the information that there was absolutely no growth in the country after the middle of August. On further questioning him, however, I learned that last season, which had an exceptionally dry autumn, was his first in this western country. Altogether he was greatly delighted with his new home, and emphatically denied any inclination to go back and work at his trade in Ontario or elsewhere.

Our camp to-night is not altogether a comfortable one, though there is excellent feed for the horses and water that answers for making tea. The mosquitoes are well nigh intolerable, and will, doubtless, continue to be so all night.

Mosquitoes are a much greater nuisance here than I ever imagined they would be. I have seen them in the swamps of Ontario, and I have suffered from them there, but I have always felt like laughing at people who thought seriously of the annoyance caused by them. A comparatively brief experience on the prairies, however, has completely altered my views on this point. The mosquitoes here are, I think, much more venomous than those found in Ontario. They are certainly much more numerous, and make a longer season. This is nearly the middle of August, and they are still so energetic and so numerous that my chance of a comfortable sleep is very poor indeed. Before starting on this trip I had become, as I thought, so seasoned to the mosquito plague that I could not suffer from it any more this year, but I found the prairie mosquito a much more formidable pest than I had imagined him. On the Seven Mile Portage, between Wabigoon and Eagle Lakes, I felt almost like laughing at the misfortunes of my fellow-travellers, who were frightfully marked with mosquito bites, while I suffered little or no annoyance from them. Here, however, I find it quite different. Every bite tells severely. Settlers here tell me that the mosquitoes are more numerous here in June and July than they are now, but if so I am inclined to think that "standing room only" should be displayed at the entrance of every little prairie ravine not later than half-past five in the afternoon. The mosquitoes are swarming into my tent at such a rate that I shall be compelled to put out the light and sleep as best I can till four o'clock to-morrow morning.

FORT ELLIOT, Aug. 13.—This has been a busy day with His Excellency, though not much country has been seen and very little travelling has been done. As this is a well-known point in the North-West, and as His Excel-

lency has now reached almost the western limit of Manitoba, it may not be out of place to do a little summing up of my observations up to this point.

So far as Fort Ellice itself is concerned I might use a great deal of space in describing its beautiful and picturesque situation and its history as a Hudson Bay post, but as neither of these are matters of vital importance to the present series of letters, I shall content myself by informing the reader that it is a Hudson Bay post of very long standing, and that it is picturesquely perched upon the high prairie bluff which forms the western limit of the broad valley of the Assiniboine. Fort Ellice is about 230 or 240 miles from Winnipeg by land, but the steamers which follow the sinuous windings of the Assiniboine have to travel something like 500 or 700 miles in order to reach here. The up trip by the river steamers takes, I believe, about ten or twelve days, while the down trip is usually made in half that time. The valley of the Assiniboine is a broad and beautiful one, but it is not looking its best at this point just now, as this spring it was all submerged by the extraordinary swelling of the river, and as a result the willows and black alders that fringe the banks of the river proper are still stained with the greyish tint of the muddy water with which they were overflowed. The outline of the valleys containing prairie streams presents a very peculiar, and, to one who has never seen them before, a very startling feature. The banks of these valleys are usually bluffs from 200 to 300 feet high. They are corrugated in all sorts of shapes, and there are curious-shaped hills, some rising to a point cone-like, and others wedge-shaped, but there is a certain limit beyond which none rise. The largest hills rise just to the level of the bluffs and no higher. At Fort Ellice one can look for miles down the river and for a considerable distance up stream, but the level of the bluff shores of the valley is always the same. It looks as though some mighty force had cut down all the highest hills and ridges to one level. Of course the banks of the Assiniboine are seamed with ravines and small streams, but instead of ridges rising beside these, one sees long stretches of level plateau broken only by these occasional indentations. Looking up from a steamer on the Assiniboine at the bluffs on both sides of the valley, a passenger would imagine that the prairie on either side of the river's valley was as level as a billiard table.

Having nearly finished the journey across Manitoba I will, as I said before, briefly sum up the results of my observations so far. From Winnipeg to Portage La Prairie His Excellency and party travelled in a nearly north-westerly course a distance of sixty miles, through a country that may be characterized as level prairie, some of which is rather low-lying, but the greater part of which can be easily drained and rendered productive.

From Portage La Prairie to Shoal Lake, a distance of some 130 miles, there is little to be seen but choice land. For about eight miles in the vicinity of Pine Creek there is some light soil, while there are some pretty formidable sloughs west of Rapid City, but the sand ridges could be made to grow fine crops, while the sloughs would be easily drainable. From Portage La Prairie to Shoal Lake the general course of the trail may be set down as

westward. Thirty miles of this is the almost treeless expanse of Big Plains, but the rest of it is undulating prairie, furnished more or less liberally with little clumps of poplar, black alder, and willow. From Shoal Lake to Fort Ellice (this point) the general direction of the trail is nearly westward, and the distance is 32 miles. Here there are some few stony places, but otherwise the country is very like that already described. Altogether I should say that 99 per cent. of the land I have seen in passing out to within twelve miles of the western boundary of Manitoba will ultimately be worked profitably for farming purposes, and not less than 95 per cent. would (with a very little expenditure for draining) rank as choice agricultural land.

AT THE HUDSON BAY POST.

To-day, at about ten o'clock, a guard of honour furnished by the Mounted Police, escorted His Excellency from the Assiniboine ferry to the Hudson Bay Company's fort, where very comfortable quarters had been prepared for him in the residence of Mr. Archibald McDonald, the Hudson Bay agent at this place. His Excellency was somewhat averse to relapsing into the luxuries of indoor life again, and though they availed themselves of the hospitalities of Mr. McDonald, they had their tents pitched within the palisades of the fort. In the afternoon there was an Indian pow-wow, which, after what the visitors had seen at various points on their way up was not a particularly interesting affair. There were about 500 Indian men, women, and children present, consisting mainly of Saulteaux (pronounced Soto), Sioux, and a very few Crees, though the Saulteaux may be classed as a branch of the great Cree family. Among the Saulteaux Chiefs were "The Gambler," "the Man Who Stands Upright," and "South Quill." The most prominent talker present, however, was one of the "head men" (not a chief), who is very appropriately named "Sounding Quill," for he is certainly the noisiest Indian that His Excellency has yet had to listen to. He is a stout, able-bodied man of about 45 years, and not at all bad-looking. He belongs to the Lizard Point band of Saulteaux. He was trading a few years ago, and had a train of thirty ponies and carts loaded with goods, and over \$500 in the bank; but he fell sick, and had to trust his commercial ventures to a son-in-law, who managed to bankrupt him in a single season. Sounding Quill has been something besides a trader, however, as the immense bunches of feathers he wears amply testify. Each uncoloured feather signifies a scalp taken by the wearer, and each feather that is dyed red denotes a stolen pony. Before the red men were invited into the fort Sounding Quill was practising his voice and legs outside on the green, and succeeded in gathering a considerable number of white men to listen to his speeches and watch the dancing of the pagans around him. It is needless to say that all the Indians were dressed in their most elaborate costumes, and the different groups scattered about over the grass made a decidedly striking and picturesque scene.

The group of which Sounding Quill was the centre was the most active and the noisiest. They would sing and dance in the usual monotonous Indian fashion, and in the intervals between the dances Sounding Quill would make brief and

boisterous speeches. He was continually boasting of his exploits in fighting and horse-stealing. At one time he wished to address himself particularly to the white men present, and when he thought he had secured their attention he said in his own language, with a great deal of noise and gesticulation, "Last fall I went and stole two horses out of the Blackfeet camp, and you Canadians would be very glad to do the same thing if you only thought you were men enough."

THE INDIANS IN THE FORT.

At the appointed time the Indians were brought into the fort, the Saulteaux coming first, and firing a rather crude attempt at a *feu de joie* as they passed through the gate. After they had taken their places in a semi-circle before His Excellency and suite, Sounding Quill arranged a dance among his warriors, and as soon as it was over he made another of his noisy and boastful speeches. It was something as follows:—"You can see by my body that I am a man of misery. I have been in misery all my life. I have been in a great deal of trouble, such as horse-stealing and killing people. I am not going to deny it—I am a murderer and a horse-thief and I am not ashamed of it." Of course Sounding Quill repeated every sentence and clause of his speech at least half a dozen times for the sake of emphasizing it, but the above is nearly a *verbatim* report of it, with the repetitions eliminated.

South Quill's son made a brief speech, which was neither very clear nor very pointed. He was glad to see such a crowd of people turn out to meet the Governor-General. He himself had never been in "misery" (by which he meant horse-stealing and bloodshed), but he was ready to follow in the steps of his father, South Quill, and everybody who knew South Quill knew that he was a brave and honest man. After this South Quill's three sons engaged in a dance by themselves, and then the eldest resumed his speech by saying, "When my brother-in-law went to steal horses I cried to go with him. He drank melted snow and could not catch any horses; now I will go and take a drink from the well."

"Old Long Claws" also made a short speech, but it did not amount to much in the estimation of the half-breed who was translating for me, and so I missed it. The business to be transacted with His Excellency was simply the usual growling and begging.

The Sioux were introduced by their chief who is also a native Christian minister, whose name is "Big Tin Pan." He read a short address in Sioux, and then a translation of it in English. It was substantially as follows:—

"Until we received a reserve, the gift of the Great Mother, we were wandering without a home over the land. Now we have a home, and we are trying to make ourselves comfortable like white men."

Some other prominent men among the Sioux spoke, after which His Excellency replied very briefly as follows:—

"I want to tell all here that I am very glad to see them. I look upon it as a sign of our alliance of old days that you have brought the flag with you. I see the medals on some of your breasts, tokens of service rendered the

Great Mother. Some day I hope I shall come to see your farms, which I am told you cultivate well. As representing the Great Mother, and as I am passing through the country, for this time only I have directed that a present shall be given you."

This, with a great deal of hand-shaking, brought the Fort Ellice pow-wow to a close. After it was over two cows were slaughtered and cut up for the Indians.

A NEW GUIDE.

Finding that Bailey was not only inexperienced but unable to endure the fatigue and exposure of the trip, I shipped him this evening by steamer to Winnipeg, and engaged a French half-breed here named Peter Countois. My new guide knows the western country pretty well, though he has never been as far as Fort Calgary, or Morleyville (this latter place being the extreme western point on our journey), but he is accustomed to life on the plains and appears to be strong, active, and intelligent.

CHAPTER XIV.

HIS EXCELLENCY BEYOND FORT ELLICE—MEETING WITH A HALF BREED FREIGHTER—
CARRYING GOODS ACROSS THE PLAINS—SLEEPING WITHOUT A TENT ON THE OPEN PRAIRIE
—HARD WORK FOR COMPARATIVELY SMALL PAY—A HOSPITABLE HOST.

TEN MILES WEST OF FORT ELLICE, August 14.—Finding that my buckboard (which had been sold to me by a highly recommended carriagemaker in Winnipeg) was not likely to carry me through, I traded it for a stouter one manufactured by a London, Ontario, maker, and getting my new acquisition carefully oiled, I started out only a short time after His Excellency and party had gone, intending to make a ten mile stretch across the prairie this evening, and secure an earlier start to-morrow morning than could possibly have been made from Fort Ellice. It was after dark before I reached this point, and I was just congratulating myself on having reached camp in safety, as I could already see the white tents through the thickening gloom, when an ominous "screech" came from my near front wheel that sent a chill down my spine. Peter Countois was out of the buckboard in a second, and in less than a minute after the alarm we had the wheel off, but unfortunately the box or metal bearing that should have remained in the hub, stuck hard and fast in the axle arm. I tried it with the wrench, but it would not turn or move, and nothing remains but to allow it to cool till morning, when the blacksmith belonging to the escort has promised to take and reset it in the hub for me.

ELEVEN MILES WEST OF FORT ELlice, August 15.—This has certainly been one of the longest days I remember to have spent. Anxious about the repairs to my buckboard, I was up at break of day, even before any save the night watch were stirring about His Excellency's camp. At last there was a stir, but it was the despatch of a number of the force, including the blacksmith, to hunt up stray horses. Between five and six o'clock, however, the blacksmith came down to make the necessary repairs, and in a few minutes the box was removed from the axle arm and replaced in the hub. Now, however, the wheel would not fit the arm. This the blacksmith attributed to burned grease in the box, and thinking it would work out in a short time, he went back to camp to get himself ready for the start, which was to be made at six o'clock. Remaining to work the wheel into its place, I told Peter to go and catch the mares, but this proved a very serious task, as they had gone back to Fort Ellice.

I now saw that I was sure to be left behind, but in answer to a kind enquiry sent down from His Excellency's camp, I informed Col. Herchmer that I was sure to be up with them some time in the night, and twenty minutes later I found myself alone on this big sand plain (which is really more like a desert than anything I have seen since leaving Winnipeg). I concluded I would pull down the tent and get everything ready to start as soon as Peter returned with the horses. I took the tent down, packed up everything, and was just about to load up the buckboard when I suddenly recollected that that wheel had not been put on yet. Of course I must put it on before making up the load, and so I went to work at it. After I had struggled with it for an hour I began reluctantly to admit to myself that this business of putting the wheel in place might give me some trouble. I worked for half an hour longer, and then sat down on the baggage hot and tired (for by this time the sun was fairly broiling everything on the plain), and made a few remarks about that Winnipeg carriage-maker who had sold me a buckboard that was too light and flimsily made to carry my load to the Rocky Mountains, as he assured me it would. He did not hear my remarks, of course, and he wouldn't have felt pleased and flattered if he had. Then I worked a while longer, and discovered that the box inside the hub was cracked and crumbling to pieces, and that it had always fitted the axle arm too tightly anyway. I then sat down and anathematized the London carriage-maker, whose name was painted on this new buckboard, and I am afraid I included all carriage-makers except the manufacturer of the Concord coaches and Whitewater waggons. It was nearly eleven o'clock when Peter returned with the mares, and it had seemed nearly a week to me. Of course the next thing to be done was to send him in to Fort Ellice again to procure the services and tools of a blacksmith.

I now saw clearly that at this early stage of the journey I was likely to fall fully a day behind His Excellency and party, and that I might have a great deal of trouble in making up the lost time without seriously overtaking my mares. In this matter I am rather unfortunately situated. I have only my black mares to depend upon for transport, while the whole force of the

Mounted Police is available for His Excellency, and that of the Indian Department for Mr. Dewdney, who also accompanies him. Colonel Herchmer who has charge of the escort and transport, took in a number of fresh horses at Fort Ellice, and he will find other fresh ones waiting at Qu' Appelle and Battleford, while I must depend on Minnie and Jenny, or upon such animals as I may be able to exchange them for, when they become too completely fagged out to finish the journey. Of course, by paying the difference, I may be able to secure tolerably good fresh ponies for my mares, but I am quite certain that anyone who finds himself forced to trade horses in this country is moderately sure to get the worst of it. If my mares had only been resting to-day I should not feel so annoyed and discouraged, but they have been chasing back and forward between here and the Fort all day.

Knowing that I had hours to wait before Peter could possibly return, I made an attempt to write in my journal, but the "bull-dogs," sand-flies, and deer-flies made me so thoroughly uncomfortable that I was obliged to get up and walk about. When I became tired of walking about in the broiling sun I lay down on the baggage and tried to get some rest, but the vicinity of an old camp is a wretched place to rest at any time, and particularly so on a scorching hot day. All the mosquitoes (carrion and house flies) will gather in from acres round about the spot to feast upon the refuse, and if they find a straggler lying about camp they will manifest a disposition to devour him too. Then wild bees, wasps, and hornets are all sure to be well represented, and their delegates are apt to look upon the appearance of any human being on the scene with especial disfavour. Of course they will not be the first to make an assault, but when one is not in the very best possible humour to begin with, as I was to-day, it is not difficult to get up a quarrel with a member of this irascible and stinging fraternity. At last Peter arrived, accompanied by the blacksmith from Fort Ellice, who, after working till nearly sundown, managed to put the wheel in its place once more, and after I had seen every axle arm carefully oiled I was on the way again just before dark. After driving about two miles further across the sand plain I came to the end of it, and found the trail winding through a partially dried up but very stony strip of muskeg.

I had not gone three hundred yards into this muskeg before the off front wheel of the buckboard gave a sound precisely similar to that which had dismayed me by proceeding from the other fore wheel nearly twenty-four hours before, and of course I knew that the other box had heated in spite of its having been oiled only two miles from the spot. I took off the wheel, but found the box heated and stuck to the axle just as the other had been. It did not take me long to come to the conclusion that my Winnipeg buckboard, with all its faults, was better than this new acquisition, and so I sent Peter back to the Fort to secure the return of my former vehicle on some terms, and I made up my mind to wait on the plains till he should have time to return to-morrow morning. Of course it was impossible to move the buckboard without repairs, and as the muskeg was not a fit place upon which to camp, or even to remain long as the chill of the evening was already coming

on, I made my way upon the prairie, as soon as Peter and the mares had gone, and set about looking for a spot upon which to camp. I had soon travelled nearly a mile from the spot where I had left the wrecked vehicle, and at length found a French half-breed with a loaded train bound for Edmonton, camped just at the northern edge of the plain among the little poplar bluffs. Peter had called to borrow a saddle a few minutes before I came along, and had, I suppose, told the freighter the story of our mishaps, for I had no sooner reached his camp than he shook hands with me cordially and insisted on making me thoroughly at home in his camp. He had fifteen carts and ponies in charge of two men besides himself, and calling one of these he addressed a few words in Cree which I did not understand, but a few moments later a hot supper was placed before me. I could not well refuse such cordial and well-intentioned hospitality, and besides I had no desire to do so as I was ravenously hungry and I never had much confidence in myself as a cook. I made an excellent meal, and subsequently accepted a pressing invitation to remain in the camp all night. From this man I was enabled to learn something about the business of freighting from Winnipeg to Edmonton.

The round trip, he informs me, occupies about four months or four months and a half, and the rate he was receiving was 9c. per lb. He went down light, of course, and collected his whole rate on freight bound up. These freighters must lead a wearisome life on these terrible long journeys. They are doing very well when they are making from fifteen to twenty miles per day, and often they are detained for several days together waiting for their horses to recruit. They never carry oats, and as the down trip is often made in the very worst of fly-time their ponies and oxen have next to no time in which to eat and sleep, as the insect pests render their lives well nigh intolerable. They sometimes stop in the vicinity of Winnipeg for weeks to recruit their animals, and their return journey often takes them into the bitterly cold storms of autumn and early winter. Even now one feels intensely stiff and sore as he crawls out of his blankets as the first streaks of daylight are showing in the eastern horizon and gets himself ready for a start by sunrise. What it must be in September and October I can easily imagine; but it must be remembered that these freighters work both winter and summer, though probably the greater share of the work is done in the summer and fall. Many of them do not even carry a tent, but at night roll themselves in their blankets and sleep under their carts, be the weather wet or dry. The half-breed who is so very kind to me, however, has an excellent tent in which to house himself and his men at night, but he informs me that in dry weather they often sleep without it. I think, however, that it must be very unwise for any but men of the strongest constitution to sleep unsheltered on the prairies, especially in summer, as the dews appear to be exceptionally heavy at this season at all events. To-night I shall sleep in my host's tent, but the night is so warm that we shall be forced to have the door of the tent open for the sake of ventilation. The mosquitoes are unusually numerous and active to-night, and did not the miserable uncertainty regarding my ability to successfully carry out my mission and again overtake the Vice-Regal party or outweigh all other considerations, I should think them very annoying.

CHAPTER XV.

FROM FORT ELLICE TO QU'APPELLE—EXTRAORDINARY FERTILITY OF THE SOIL—AN INDESCRIBABLY BEAUTIFUL LAND—EXQUISITE EFFECT OF COLOUR ON THE BANKS OF THE QU'APPELLE—THROUGH THE SETTLERS' PARADISE.

IN CAMP, TWENTY-FOUR MILES WEST OF FORT ELLICE, Aug. 16.—After fighting mosquitoes all night on the sand plains I arose at a very early hour, and after breakfasting with my exceedingly hospitable half-breed friend, I began to watch for Peter Countois, but it was noon before he arrived, as there had been many little accidents to delay him at Fort Ellice that morning. When he did arrive it took a long time to transfer my outfit to the light buck-board, and the result was that we only travelled about twelve miles to our present camp. Our course to-day has been through a very fine strip of rolling prairie since leaving the muskeg, which with the sand plain does not make more than about thirteen miles across the trail. We have plenty of duck-shooting, but as I am in great haste to push forward and overtake the party, I only shot what we absolutely required for the pot. At our camp to-night I saw a trace of the party in the shape of a fagged-out horse that they had been compelled to leave behind; but as they left Fort Ellice with some thirty spare horses, the loss of a few on the road will not in any way embarrass their movements. This horse is a "Broncho," and from his appearance to-night I have no doubt he will be all right in a day or two. The mosquitoes are very troublesome to-night as usual, but as I am doing my writing by the somewhat flickering and uncertain light of a "smudge-fire," they are not quite so attentive to me now as I have no doubt they will be as soon as I retire.

IN CAMP, SEVENTY-FIVE MILES WEST OF FORT ELLICE, Aug. 17.—According to the way they measure distances here I have driven fifty-one miles to-day, but if I were to judge of the pace and driving time, to the best of my ability I should set the distance at ten miles farther. Of this fifty or sixty miles (as the case may be), I do not think there is a square foot untillable. In fact it appears to me to be all the very choicest of black loam.

For the first few miles this morning we were among what are called here "poplar bluffs," but why they should be called "bluffs" is more than I can tell. As I have said, however, for the first six or eight miles the trail went along over very gently undulating prairie, winding in and out among little clumps of small poplar, so that the view was at all times very limited. For the next twenty miles we were making our way over more open country, the open spaces being often as much as four or five miles wide. We met numerous trains of freighters and one or two parties of emigrants, nearly all bound for Edmonton or Prince Albert. All appear to be delighted with what they have already seen of the North-West Territory, but they are quite de-

terminated to push on to their respective destinations. In the afternoon we passed over an open stretch of prairie some eight or ten miles wide, and then striking through a mile or two of poplar bluffs, found ourselves upon the verge of what appeared to be a boundless plain.

This is certainly the largest plain we have yet seen, but as our course was across the northern edge of it, a drive of some twenty miles brought us to the first of the bluffs on the west side of it, and arriving here after sunset I was very glad to avail myself of the kind hospitality of Mr. McIntyre (a Montreal man) who was in charge of a surveyor's camp, and escape the trouble of pitching a tent and building a fire so late at night. I think I must have traversed fully sixty miles to-day, and as I said before, every foot of it is not only susceptible of cultivation, but extremely rich and unquestionably very productive. There are some few sloughs, but nearly or quite all of them could be very readily drained by anything like united action on the part of those interested, or to say the least of it, on the part of the municipalities in which they would happen to be located.

And yet in the face of this, I was told by an enthusiastic admirer of Manitoba, that I would find little or no land fit for settlement outside "the Province." So far this statement looks as though it was likely to be most pronouncedly refuted.

QU'APPELLE MISSION, FOUR MILES EAST OF FORT QU'APPELLE, Aug. 18. —I have had another long drive to-day, and I learn here I am only four miles behind His Excellency and party, but unfortunately my buck-board will not stand the strain of another day's travel without pretty thorough repairs, while the two successive days of heavy driving have had the effect of leaving my mares somewhat leg-weary and fagged out.

The drive to-day has been the most delightful of the whole journey so far, the approach to the valley of the Qu'Appelle and the valley itself being absolutely indescribably beautiful. Leaving Mr. Nelson's camp on the prairie early this morning (a very few minutes after six), the trail led through some of the loveliest prairie scenery. There was just enough of undulation to relieve the monotony of jogging along on a dead level, and still there were neither enough of undulation nor poplar bluffs to obscure or even limit the vision. Away to the south and west was opened out a great plain that looked like an immense concave stretching away till the bright fawn-colour of the prairie rose in a sharp rim against the hazy blue of an August sky. Suddenly, as I was gazing about on the transcendent loveliness I looked to the westward, and there where but a few moments before I saw nothing but the bright yellow and fawn-coloured grasses of the prairie, rose the north and west shore of the Qu'Appelle River. As the bright morning sun rested upon this bank it presented a picture which for brilliancy of colour and exquisite light and shade is unequalled by anything I have ever seen. Like the shores bordering the valleys of all these prairie streams, the summit line of this north-west bank of the Qu'Appelle presented an absolute level, but its face is full of irregular indentations some of which are shadowed by a rich growth of young poplars, while others are lined with the green and gold of growing and

ripened prairie grasses. A thin and transparent steel blue haze hung about the face of the cliffs, shallow upon the golden promontories and deeper in the ravines, the effect of the whole being that of a great fretted wall, elaborately coloured in bronze and purple and blue, with a bright golden fringe of gleaming, sunlit, ripened grass, waving along its crest. Overhead was a sky of clear soft blue, with a translucent, lustrous tint near the horizon, and in this belt of radiant sky of mingled blue and straw colour, floated little feather-edged cloud islets of gleaming silver, delicate French grey, and softest dove colour.

Soon the trail began to descend one of the ravines that indent the south-eastern bank of the valley of the river. The trail down into the valley was steep, narrow, and tortuous, now passing down through a narrow defile enclosed by wooded walls on either side, and now winding around the curving brow of some promontory, horses and waggon seeming to hang upon the face of the precipice. At length we were fairly in the valley, which is certainly the most delightful and park-like that I have ever seen. The river itself is a small stream, averaging not more than fifteen or twenty yards in width, but varying very considerably in depth. The bottom and banks are for the most part made up of gravel and sand, the upper portion of the banks being overlaid with from one and a half to two feet of rich black loam. The stream is only moderately swift, and wanders about from side to side of its broad valley in the most unaccountably tortuous manner. The valley, I should say, has an average width from a mile and a half to two miles, and this bottom land, though considerably above even the high water mark in the river, is for the most part level, or lying in very gentle slopes towards the river's brim. The bend of the river often takes in the entire width of the valley, and some of the most beautiful claims I have yet seen are included in these broad, rounded points, where a neat little farm may be seen bounded by a single curve of the river in the exact shade of an ox bow. That these slopes are extremely fertile, the rich growth of wild pea vine, succulent grasses, and a profusion of all sorts of prairie flowers gives abundant evidence; but as one passes further up the valley and comes upon the first squatter's claim he becomes convinced beyond all doubt of the wondrous richness of the soil. Here, wheat, oats, barley, corn, potatoes, and nearly all sorts of grain and root crops may be seen flourishing luxuriantly. The banks enclosing this incomparable valley, though for the most part decidedly abrupt, are curiously fretted with coulees and ravines; between which rise odd-shaped mounds and little promontories assuming the form of cones, pyramids, and hemispheres, and these mounds and promontories are as fantastically ornamented with curious sharp-edged sections of green and yellow grasses, and the deeper green of poplar clumps, hedges, and borders, as if they had been arranged to suit the quaint whims of the most capricious of landscape gardeners.

About eleven o'clock we reached the ford, where a half-breed has a remarkably pretty and promising claim.

I camped on the farther bank for luncheon, and before I had finished the meal, Mr. Nelson, who is surveying Indian reserves in the territory, crossed the river and camped close beside me. From Mr. Nelson I learned much

concerning the North-West Territories which was indeed a surprise. According to his very extensive observations the percentage of good arable land in the territory must be vastly greater than is generally supposed. He tells me that the valley of the Qu'Appelle is much the same as that which I have already seen along its whole extent from the foot of the most easterly of the Qu'Appelle lakes down to where this river falls into the Assiniboine, a distance of some two hundred miles. Mr. Nelson also informs me that the Edmonton district is the best in the North-West, and as his views are corroborated by that of many others whom I have met, I think I shall make a strenuous effort to visit that region before I return to Toronto. All the afternoon I was driving briskly along this incomparably lovely valley of the Qu'Appelle, and I made a halt at the foot of the first or most easterly of the beautiful Qu'Appelle lakes, a lovely sheet of water clear as crystal, and about a mile wide by twelve long. Here I rested and fed the horses, enjoyed a delightful swim in the lake, and then harnessing up again, drove on to my present camp at the mission, which is just at the head of the lake. I should explain, however, that I am travelling by Winnipeg time, which of course is very much faster than meridian time.

The drive along the north shore of the lake this evening was a picturesque and delightful one. Now the trail would plunge through a little ravine, where the young poplars rose in a thick green wall, so close on either hand that their boughs were brushing the clouds of mosquitoes off the mares' necks and sides, and the next moment it was winding around the swelling face of some grassy promontory, whose verdant breast rose abruptly some fifty or a hundred feet above my head, while almost beneath the horses' feet and from the very verge of the trail was an almost sheer descent of fully a hundred feet to the glistening surface of the lake below. As we neared the Mission the sun had gone down, but in the horizon where it had sunk to rest hung a bright zone of crimson, fading to rose-colour and pink in its upper edge till it blended with the translucent border of lemon gold about it, and this in turn faded into delicate straw-colour that gradually blended with the soft clear blue of the evening sky. Beneath this, with a low dark strip of prairie intervening (in which the smoke fires at the mission glistened like settings of diamonds) the gleaming lake reflected in all its brilliancy and perfection the glories of the sunset sky with its varying shades inverted; and nearer still, and all around the bases of these little swelling promontories it lay in dark shining blue, like the cold gleam of polished steel, save in one spot where an errant puff of wind, from a ravine in the opposite shore, had raised a little islet of the daintiest ripples in pale grey, as though a tiny cloud of mist had for a moment dimmed the burnished steel. And away to the eastward stretched the motionless mirror while close along its shining surface in the pale rays of the slow coming starlight came the cold grey night mists rolling up toward the sunset.

But I knew my progress along this narrow shelving trail that overhangs the lake was anything but safe, and as Peter Contois informed me that the trail along the second lake to the Fort was of precisely the same character,

I concluded to camp at the mission for the night. To-night I am the guest of Mr. Antoine Le Roch, a wealthy and most genial representative of that extremely genial and hospitable class to be found pioneering everywhere in the North-West, the French half-breeds. Mr. Le Roch has known what it is to fight the Sioux in days gone by, and many a season has he spent running buffalo on the plains. He knows, too, what trading is, but now he has settled down, a wealthy farmer, in the lovely valley of the Qu'Appelle.

A FARM AT QU'APPELLE.

FORT QU'APPELLE, August 19.—I was stirring early this morning, as usual, as I knew I had a pretty heavy day's work before me independent of any which I might find time to bestow upon my journal. My mares, as I have already intimated, were pretty thoroughly worn out with the heavy driving which my delays had rendered it absolutely necessary to give them, and I was anxious, if possible, to exchange them for fresh ponies. My buckboard was also used up to such an extent that nothing short of a thorough overhauling would make it fit to carry me any farther, and even then I could hardly hope to get through the rough country about Touchwood Hills with it. I decided therefore to go at once to the Fort and do the best I could toward trading off both mares and buckboard. After breakfasting sumptuously on fresh vegetables in great variety, smoked and dried buffalo meat of the finest quality, and the richest and best of fresh milk, and in fact all the comforts and luxuries with which the settler's table is like to be loaded, I went out with my genial host to look over a little of his domains. One of the first things to attract my attention was a finely bred bay stallion, compactly and handsomely built, bloodlike in outline, and withal none too large to cross upon the native pony mare. In the selection of a stallion for service in this region—I think Mr. Le Roch has shown a deal of good sense, and I cannot but think that the cross of this horse upon the native mares will be productive of just the class of horses most needed in this country at present. In a future portion of my journal, when perhaps I shall have had a little more experience and knowledge of the native pony, I shall have something more to say about horse-breeding in the North-West.

I next visited Mr. Le Roch's garden, where I found all sorts of ordinary vegetables flourishing luxuriantly, and in a fairly advanced state for the time of year. The soil in this valley is evidently not of that cold, heavy nature too often found in river bottoms. Beneath the thick upper stratum of rich black loam, there appears to be a substratum of gravelly clay and sand, which is thoroughly conducive to the natural and prompt drainage of the soil, and consequent early and rapid vegetation. In this respect I think the soil of a great portion of the North-West Territory is vastly superior to that of Manitoba. In the province there seems to be a substratum of very tenacious, close-grained clay which holds the water persistently and renders the surface very slow to dry up after rain. To-day I saw in Mr. Le Roch's wheat fields as fine a sample of wheat as I ever saw at any of our Provincial Exhibitions. The whole crop was within a day or two of being fit for harvesting; and catching

a head of wheat at random, I rubbed it in my hands, and was more than astonished at the result. The bulk of grain produced from the single ear was astonishing. Indeed, it seemed as if I had blown nothing but the thinnest of covering away in chaff, and there remained in my hand the great plump berry, larger than any I have ever seen, and withal as firm and hard as if it had been kiln dried. In short, it was absolute perfection in quantity, size, weight, texture, and colour. As Mr. Le Roch only commenced farming the year before last, he was not in a position to give me figures as to the yield per acre. In fact he had only a very small amount sowed last year, and though it turned out extremely well, he did not make any estimate as to the yield per acre. This year he has not yet taken in his harvest, but the grain stands very thick upon the ground, and every straw, though all are particularly stout and strong, has upon it an ear of grain that is just all it can support. I should judge that Mr. Le Roch's wheat crop (which, however, I think is exceptionally good, even for the North-West) would run as high as thirty-five to forty bushels to the acre, while his crop of oats and barley are proportionately good; and the other settlers in this lovely valley have, I should say, crops that average equally well.

The Catholic Mission Farm here appears to be a very thriving institution, producing magnificent crops, and having upon its premises a valuable herd of cattle.

SOME LOCAL REQUIREMENTS.

Among the immediate wants of this region may be counted a grist mill and a saw mill. The nearest grist mill is some 230 miles distant.

The ceiling of Mr. Le Roch's house is made up of poplar boards ten feet long, six inches wide, and an inch thick. These were hauled by Mr. Le Roch fifteen miles from a saw pit, where he purchased them at twenty-five cents each; and there is a considerable quantity of fairly good small poplar all along the valley of the Qu'Appelle.

Last spring oats sold here at \$1.75 per bushel, wheat at \$2.00, potatoes at \$1.50, barley at \$1.75, turnips at \$1.00, and onions at \$1.50.

While there are already a number of half-breeds settled in Qu'Appelle valley, I am surprised that such a lovely tract of land should be comparatively uninhabited.

At the Mission I found that very beautiful preparations had been made for the reception of Lord Lorne. For a long distance the children had walled in the trail on either side with young poplars, and at the end of these, by the Mission gate was a double arch, canopy, and throne, all beautifully combined in one structure, which was charmingly ornamented with green boughs, fresh flowers and, bunting. Here I am told an address was presented to His Excellency by the instructors at the Mission, to which he made an extemporaneous reply in French.

Fort Qu'Appelle is charmingly situated at the head of the second of the Qu'Appelle lakes, which is only about four miles long. These lakes are in all four in number, and they take up nearly the whole width of the valley of the river. They are connected by a narrow stream about the same size as I

have already described the Qu'Appelle River to be, and this winding stream wanders through the low strips of bottom lands between the lakes. On the most easterly of these intervening strips of bottom is located the Mission, and on the second are situated the H. B. Company's fort or trading post, the Mounted Police barracks, a store or two, and some few cottages, including a very commodious and comfortable one belonging to Col. Macdonald, of the Indian Department. Altogether the buildings make up a very pretty little hamlet, nestling as it does in this lovely valley, and I question if there are many more charming town sites in the Dominion.

So far as my own doings at Qu'Appelle are concerned they will not be very interesting to the reader. After getting my buckboard repaired, I succeeded in trading it for a White Water waggon that had originally been purchased for the Boundary Commission some ten years ago. It is not at all handsome, but it is apparently very strong and light-running for a vehicle of its strength. Of course it cost me much more than it would be worth to anyone not situated as I am, but I am quite accustomed to that sort of thing. And indeed if I were to put my buckboard at its actual value now rather than the price I paid for it in Winnipeg, I do not know that I should have much, if any, the worst of the bargain without regarding the absolute necessity of my having something at once that will carry me along on my journey.

I made an attempt to trade off my mares for four native ponies, but the animals brought me were such a sorry-looking lot that I rejected them without much hesitation. The best of them was a nine-year-old brown gelding about fourteen hands and a quarter high. He was low in flesh, long-backed, short-quartered, cat-hammed, and raw-boned, but he had fair action, and for a native pony he was a tolerably free driver. As if to add to his unsightliness, both his ears had been split. (The Crees mark the ears of their ponies just as the Ontario farmers do those of their sheep. The half-breeds and white men usually brand their ponies.) The second best was a four-year-old grey gelding, about fourteen hands high, and had never been in harness, and was therefore of no use to me. The third was a buckskin-coloured gelding, nine or ten years old, under thirteen hands high, and was as ill-shapen and lazy as it was possible for so small a pony to be. He, too, was very thin, and was badly buck-shinned. The fourth and last would have been a bright chestnut, with a broad blaze in the face, had he not been in such a frightful condition with mange that his colour was almost disguised, while his face from the point of his nose up to his eyes was full of raw sores and bleeding. In addition to this, he was so thin that he looked as though he would fall apart if his mange scabs were scraped off his hide. As for the general make-up, I am inclined to the belief that some thirty years ago, when he may be supposed to have been free from disease and ailments, that this fellow was a six-year-old chestnut gelding, fourteen and a half hands high, and the most ill-shapen pony to be found among the Crees, Saulteaux, or Sioux Indians. I could not help but laugh at the brutes as they were led past me for inspection, as they only required to be ridden by members of Sir John Falstaff's famous contingent to have presented one of the most grotesque of pictures ;

but the circumstance had also a serious side, as this abortive attempt at horse trade had cost me so much time that it was quite out of the question for me to move on to-day, and yet I could hardly blame the fellows who went out to hunt up the ponies either, for they supposed that as I was from the city, and a special correspondent at that, I would not know one pony from another. As it was, I had the fore shoes reset on my black mares, and have made ready for an early start to-morrow morning.

The reception of His Excellency at Qu'Appelle was, I am told, a most brilliant affair in its way. A great number of Indians and half-breeds rode down the trail on their ponies to meet him, and as the *cortege* swept into the little village it was almost hidden in the cloud of dust raised by the galloping ponies and the smoke from hundreds of guns that were being discharged in his honour.

Before leaving next morning His Excellency was presented by Mr. McLean, of the Hudson Bay Company, with the most perfect elk head and antlers which the oldest hunters now living in the North-West ever remember to have seen. Col. De Winton was also presented by the same gentleman with a curiosity in the shape of a Sioux war club. The staff of this curious weapon, which is about three feet and a half long, is of twisted rawhide three quarters of an inch in diameter, a trifle more flexible than whalebone, and the head an egg-shaped piece of white marble, pointed at both ends.

A HOSPITABLE COMMUNITY.

At Qu'Appelle I found the officials of the Hudson Bay Company, the Mounted Police, and the Indian Department, all particularly attentive to my interests, and ready to do anything in their power to serve me; all delivered to me the kindest messages from His Excellency, and informed me that he had requested them to do all in their power to assist me in overtaking his party. I need not say that I am deeply grateful to Lord Lorne for the very kindly interest he has taken in my welfare, which, under the circumstances, is particularly cheering and encouraging. It is, perhaps, hardly necessary to add just here that from the hour of leaving Toronto, I have been treated with the utmost kindness and courtesy by Colonel De Winton and every member of the Governor-General's party, while Colonel Herchmer and the officers and men of the Mounted Police have always been ready to lend a hand whenever I required assistance. To-night I am encamped at Fort Qu'Appelle, ready for an early start to-morrow morning.

His Excellency is now a day's journey ahead of me, and with a jaded pair of horses my chances of overtaking him soon are by no means encouraging.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SOIL AND THE FOREST OF TOUCHWOOD HILLS—PRAIRIE WOLVES HOWL DISMALLY NEAR THE CAMP—THE MARES ASTRAY ON THE PLAINS—A THUNDER STORM ON THE PRAIRIE—MYRIADS OF BADGER, HARE, DUCK, AND PRAIRIE CHICKEN—THE GREAT SALT PLAINS AND ALKALI BEDS.

IN CAMP NEAR SOUTHERN LIMIT OF TOUCHWOOD HILLS, Aug. 20.—This morning broke warm and drizzling, but by the time we were on the trail for Touchwood Hills the rain had ceased to fall, while the atmosphere remained warm and muggy; the clouds hung low and threateningly over-head. My course lay nearly due north, and as the mares climbed up the winding ravine that leads up out of the valley of Qu'Appelle they were fairly covered with mosquitoes that swarmed about the waggon in hungry thousands. As we reached the level of the prairie above I hoped that there would be a breeze sufficient to carry off the insect pests, but there was not a breath. One could hardly open his mouth without swallowing a mosquito, and every individual insect appeared to be endowed with the venom and persistent energy of forty of the kind usually met with. Even Peter Countois, who has spent most of his life camping on the prairies, was sorely punished by them, and at about eight o'clock he suggested that we should camp for breakfast and make a smudge to drive them off, so that we might have a brief respite to say the least of it. As soon as the mares were unharnessed they rolled repeatedly to rid themselves of their tormentors, while Peter and I soon had a "smudge" that drove them out of our immediate vicinity. About half-past nine or ten o'clock a slight breeze sprang up and the sun came out, so that we were able to harness the mares and drive on again with some degree of comfort.

The remainder of the drive to-day was quite uneventful, though very enjoyable, as it led through beautiful rolling prairie land of the finest quality. On the way to-day, as on almost every day since we left the railway, we have passed several parties of immigrants, the majority of whom are bound either for Edmonton or Prince Albert, these two settlements being evidently the most popular with immigrants coming into the North-West just now.

To-night we are encamped near the southern limit of Touchwood Hills. It was nearly dark when we left the open prairie and we drove in among hills which are thickly covered with clumps of poplar till it became so dark that it was impossible to proceed any further. Our tent is pitched in a lonesome little glade, hemmed in with clumps of young poplars. The prairie wolves are howling dismally not far from the tent, but our provisions are safely stored inside the little tent, and we have nothing to dread from the depredations of those incorrigible thieves. To-day we were unlucky enough to lose the axe, and as a consequence we shall have some difficulty in collecting wood for a fire on which to cook breakfast.

IN CAMP ON EASTERN LIMIT OF SALT PLAIN, August 21.—This morning Peter Countois was early astir, and though I was up very soon after him I saw nothing of him as I came out of the tent. I looked about for a few moments and soon saw him coming over a high hill to the eastward and making for camp. As he came in I divined what was wrong for he looked extremely serious. The mares had strayed off. In the darkness last night he could not find the hobble to put on one of them, and concluding that it had gone after the axe Peter had "improvised" a hobble out of an old pair of duck overalls. It seems that these had not proved strong enough to keep Miss Jenny's fore legs coupled, and that she and Minnie (who does not wear hobbles) had strayed off, and for anything we knew to the contrary might keep out of our sight for days, or even weeks. The prospect was certainly not a very pleasant one, and I was not surprised that Peter should look very "glum" over it. Without stopping to prepare breakfast we set promptly to work at hunting for the wanderers. Had the prairie been tolerably open the task of looking them up would not have been very serious, but as the country was very hilly, and as fully half of it was covered by the little clumps of young poplars that always appeared to hem us in on every side the task of looking for our pair of mares appeared almost as hopeless as looking for the proverbial needle in the time-honoured hay-stack.

I took my field glass and wandered off in an aimless sort of fashion, taking observations in all directions from every particularly high hill within a radius of a mile of camp, while Peter took our back trail, divining that the mares might be possessed of an insane desire to return to Winnipeg. I did not find the mares, but from the hill which I climbed in search of them I beheld one of the most beautiful park-like expanses imaginable. Away to the north what are known as the "Big Touchwood Hills" rose like a mountain range of considerable magnitude. They appeared in the distance to be densely wooded, and I am told that they do grow timber of a very fair size, but the trail we are taking does not lead through them. Nearer at hand are the "Little Touchwood Hills." These constitute one of the most picturesque and promising regions in the North-West. They are all partially wooded with a light growth of poplar, but the supply of wood is no greater than that which will either be used by the settlers themselves or find a ready market with the future settlers on the adjacent plains. Here too the sloughs partake considerably of the character of lakes and ponds, and altogether it would be hard to find a more attractive region. After I had spent between three and four hours wandering over the hills in no very enviable frame of mind, I returned to the camp, which was still as lonely and deserted as I had left it. It was very evident that Peter had not returned, and I was just reckoning up the chances of my mares being caught on the back track and brought along this evening by an immigrant whom I passed yesterday noon, when my ear caught the sound of Peter's voice singing a French song, and a few moments later he came in sight on the Qu'Appelle trail. The mares had taken the back track that morning, walked about two miles on their homeward journey, and had then lain down to rest where Peter caught them.

We were soon on our way, trying to make up for four hours' lost time by pushing on as rapidly as possible. We had not gone half a mile however when we met a half-breed who informed Peter that we were a long way off the trail which His Excellency had taken and which we had intended to follow, the mistake having occurred when we were driving after dark last night. The half-breed informed us, however, that the trail we had taken led more directly to Fort Carlton than the one which we had missed, the latter taking in the Hudson Bay Company's trading post and the former the Protestant Mission. We were now too far on the way to think of going back to the forks of the trail, and so I hurried along. After driving about eight or ten miles, over a very hilly and rough cart trail I came upon a small settlement which I rightly judged to be the Protestant Mission. The farms had a well-to-do, thrifty look, as though an excellent soil was being well farmed. The only human being I met about the place was the Rev. Mr. Cook, Episcopalian missionary. He was very kind and courteous in the way of furnishing me with every information regarding the best way to make my way to the edge of the salt plains, and rendered me valuable assistance by securing for me a quantity of "shaganappy" with which to make some much-needed repairs to my waggon pole (the same which had done duty in my buckboard, and coming down from Winnipeg, of course, it required some repairing every day. I had already spent the price of three Ontario waggon poles in repairs upon this one). "Shaganappy" (I am spelling it as nearly phonetically as I can), consists merely of raw buffalo hide dried in thongs or strips. It is used for a great variety of purposes here. The Indians and half-breeds make halters, bridles, harness, ropes, and a great variety of articles out of it, and I never heard of a piece of it wearing out. The iron to be had here is very expensive, and of a wretched quality, and after a man gets to "know a thing or two" about this country, he uses as little of it as possible. A substitute for a drawing-brace of any kind, a bolt or a clip, can be made much lighter, stronger, and more durable, and for far less money out of shaganappy than out of iron. For such purposes the rawhide is soaked in water over night, and then stretched and drawn into place as tightly as possible, and securely knotted. As it dries it shrinks with such tremendous force that it will actually indent the hardwood work of a carriage or waggon to some extent, and after that the only way to remove it is to chop it off with an axe. It is without exception the best material for readily repairing breakdowns that I have ever met with.

Up to the mission, my general course from Qu'Appelle had been nearly due north, but I now struck off toward the north-west, the trail leading through the south-west corner of the small Touchwood Hills region, leaving the Touchwood Hills trading post ten miles or more on my right to the north and east. The route was a very hilly one, in fact the horses were continually either ascending or descending pretty steep hills, and my progress was necessarily slow.

This country through which I passed to-day, should some day be a great stock-raising region. The soil, though for the most part admirable, is some-

what lighter than that to be found on the open prairies and plains, but I am quite sure it would be very easily worked, and be found capable of producing luxuriant crops. These hills too could hardly fail to furnish wonderfully fine pasturage, even in the driest seasons, as on their northern slopes, as well as in the ravines between them, the grass would remain fresh and green the whole season through. The few fields that I have seen to-day have remarkably fine crops, and all in all I should consider the Touchwood Hills an excellent locality in which to settle. There appears to be plenty of timber, not only to furnish the settler with all the logs [and lumber he would require for his house, barn, sheds, etc., but with fuel for many years to come, while in nearly every case he would find enough of open prairie on his land to keep his available forces employed in breaking up and cultivating for many years before it would be necessary for him to strip an acre of his wood land for cultivation.

To the north of the trail I noticed many very curious conical and pyramidal hills rising abruptly above the lower surrounding ones, which had for the most part a spherical surface. As the afternoon was getting pretty well advanced, I was glad to get out of the rough, unfrequented trail over which I had been driving all day, and strike the regular Edmonton trail, which, though made entirely by carts and other one-horse (or one-ox) vehicles, proved to be moderately smooth, and in all places well beaten out. In the regular freighting route between Edmonton and Winnipeg, Fort Qu'Appelle is not usually taken in, as it makes the journey either way about a day longer. Instead of going southward to Qu'Appelle, after leaving Touchwood Hills trading post, they strike diagonally across Pheasant Plains for Fort Ellice. There many of them take their loads from the cargoes of the Assiniboine steamers, while others move on to Portage la Prairie or Winnipeg, by much the same route as that which we have travelled. I had now gone ten miles north and west on the Edmonton trail before I had the satisfaction of seeing His Excellency's camp pitched just to the left of the trail. I had been out of sight of it for just one week, and doing all in my power to reach it. I met with the most cordial and hearty reception on reaching the camp, and my mares had hardly come to a standstill before some of the Mounted Police Force were unharnessing them, while others were unloading the waggon and pitching my tent. I had barely set foot upon the ground when I was very cordially welcomed back to camp by Colonel De Winton, who brought a request from His Excellency that I should dine with him. It is needless to say that such a cordial welcome was grateful this evening, after what has been to me unquestionably a very hard and perplexing week's work. According to his custom His Excellency had camped on Saturday night to remain without stirring further till Monday morning, and it was in this Sunday camp that I overtook the vice-regal party. The only events of any account which had taken place in Lord Lorne's progress during the past week, were the loss of some few horses and the loss of a finger by constable Leamy of the Mounted Police. A waggon had stuck in a mud hole, and he was adjusting a rope with which it was to be pulled out, when the horses starting suddenly, his finger was caught in a bight of the

rope and crushed so hopelessly that Dr. Sewell found it necessary to amputate it at the second joint.

We are camped among the bluffs to-night, close to the edge of what are known as the "Big Salt Plains," which are somewhere about thirty-five miles wide. Peter tells me that there are only a few places along the trail in this big plain, where water can be had that is fit for a horse to drink, and he also tells me that it will be necessary for us to carry firewood with us for our noon-day camp. Mr. Dewdney and his party started out across this plain just before my arrival this evening, and as there is a tremendous thunderstorm coming, I fear he will pass a rough night.

IN CAMP ON WESTERN LIMIT OF BIG SALT PLAINS, August 22.—The thunderstorm which was threatening us last night when I returned to my tent after dinner burst upon us with tremendous fury just as I was closing my journal. It was the first really heavy thunderstorm I have weathered in this little bell-tent, and as it was accompanied by a heavy gale it afforded me a fair opportunity of judging how admirably a small bell-tent is adapted for rough weather. At times the lightning would come flash after flash in such blinding brilliancy that the remotest corners of the tent were as light as day for ten or twelve seconds at a time, and in the midst of this dazzling blaze the thunder would burst forth overhead with such an awful voice that the very earth would quiver; then for a few seconds there would be a lull, and one could hear the tent folds flapping in the fierce gale, and the rain pouring down the canvas in torrents. But in all this storm of wind and rain not a peg was started and not a drop of rain came into the tent. This morning the thunder storm had passed off, but a cold drizzle followed that was anything but agreeable. Toward noon, however, the temperature became much more pleasant, the rain ceased to fall and at length the sun shone out bright and warm. Our mid-day camp was made about half-way across the great plain after a pretty severe drive of twenty-two miles over the soft, and in places very slippery trail. There was not much of interest to be seen through the thick mist and gloom that hung over the alkali plain this morning. As already intimated, our camp to-night is not far beyond the western boundary of the Big Salt Plain. The spot is a rather pretty one among the bluffs, and there is capital shooting all around the camp in every direction. A hare killed by Col. DeWinton, and a badger by Capt. Percival, being added this evening to unusually large bags of duck and prairie chicken.

THE SALT PLAIN.

As nearly as I could make out a very large proportion of the land on the Big Salt Plain, as it is called, is of excellent quality, but in crossing it to-day I noticed several patches of heavy, cold, light-coloured clay that indicated anything but rich arable land. There is also what my guide calls a salt marsh of some twenty acres in extent, and numerous alkaline sloughs. In fact, I am of opinion that nearly all the sloughs on this great plain are more or less alkaline, and that until these are drained off, or until alkali is worked out of the soil by cropping, that this plain will never be a fit place for horses

to run at large. It is a well-known fact, however, that cattle can drink of the most alkaline of these sloughs with perfect safety. In fact, the freighters say that this water is particularly good for cows and oxen. Even supposing that the whole of this alkaline plain were not fit for farming purposes (and I firmly believe that 90 per cent. of it is capital soil), what a splendid summer run it would make for stock raisers on Touchwood Hills! Here, too, hay could be put up for a dollar a ton, and here would be a magnificent run for thousands upon thousands of cattle that need only to be branded and herded throughout the whole summer, and driven into the hills and "rounded up" for market the following autumn. Certain it is that, whether it should prove valuable for settlement or not, this great alkaline plain must prove a very important adjunct to the Touchwood Hills region.

CHAPTER XVII.

A TREELESS EXPANSE OF RICH PRAIRIE SOIL—PROSPECTS OF UNTIMBERED LANDS—WARNING TO THE SHIFTLESS DENIZENS OF EASTERN TOWNS—THE GUIDE TAKEN ILL.

IN CAMP ON THE PLAINS WEST OF HUMBOLDT, Aug. 23.—To-day we travelled through a beautiful, gently-undulating prairie country in which the grassy stretches were thickly interspersed with little clumps or "bluffs" of poplar for about fifteen or sixteen miles, and then reached the first telegraph station which we have come upon since leaving Portage la Prairie. It was of little use to us, however, for while we could with its aid communicate with Battleford and some other points west of us, the wires were down between Humboldt and Winnipeg, and they were not likely to be up again for some time. It seems that there is no attempt made to keep this line open in summer, and that the rise in Lake Manitoba has placed some miles of it quite under water. Of course the route will have to be changed, since the northern route for the railway has been abandoned, and should it be brought down so as to take in such settlements as Brandon, Rapid City, Minnedosa, Shoal Lake, Fort Ellice, Qu'Appelle, Touchwood Hills, Prince Albert, Duck Lake, Fort Carlton, and thence on to Battleford and Edmonton, it would be of some use to the settlers, Government officials, Hudson Bay Company's people, independent traders, and the inhabitants of the country generally.

In starting for our afternoon journey we were obliged to take along a supply of wood sufficient for cooking supper and breakfast, as the open prairie before us was some thirty miles wide with not a solitary clump of trees within reach of the trail. Here we found Mr. Dewdney in camp waiting for us. Some excellent shooting was had before dark, but soon after sundown the air

became exceptionally chilly, almost frosty in fact. The country through which we have driven this afternoon is a rich, rolling, but treeless expanse. I do not think I saw a square foot of land to-day that was not rich and even exceptionally productive; but, of course, in settling a country where they have so much to choose from farmers will first select for settlement such localities as Touchwood Hills, the valley of the Qu'Appelle, and prairies where "bluffs" are found in sufficient numbers and extent to guarantee a supply of logs, or at least, poles for buildings and fire-wood for a few years, at all events, rather than a rich but treeless and unsheltered claim. The time is close at hand, however, closer than people generally suppose, when farms in these unsheltered prairies will be eagerly sought after, when the extension and elaboration of the railway system shall have brought the coal of the North Saskatchewan to the very doors of the farmers in this fertile region. It will not greatly matter whether a settler has a few clumps of young poplars on his farm or is ploughing every square foot of a treeless claim. Many a reader will of course shake his head incredulously and set me down as an enthusiast, just as other men who have told the truth about this wonderful region have been disbelieved, but I am quite willing to be set down as an enthusiast on this subject and bide my time. The people of Ontario and the people of Winnipeg are gaining a nearly adequate idea of the grand possibilities of Manitoba as a great farming Province, but Manitoba's relation in size to the great fertile North-West is about that of a postage stamp on the corner of a letter. I am now nearly or quite five hundred miles north-west of Winnipeg, and since leaving it I have not seen an acre of land wholly unfit for cultivation. Fully ninety-nine per cent. of the territory I have seen since leaving Winnipeg will ultimately become productive farming land. As a rule the soil of the North-West Territory is not quite so deep and heavy as that of Manitoba, but from what I have seen of it I should say, that it is equally as productive if not more so, and that it will be much more easily drained and be found to be of a warmer nature, for instead of the sticky, fine-grained blue clay of Manitoba, it has a subsoil of clayey gravel and sand.

Now I earnestly hope that what I have written in my journal to-night may not be the means of sending up here helpless tradesmen without means and shiftless wanderers who have hitherto failed in everything they have undertaken. I give this word of warning, not merely in sincere commiseration for the class alluded to, but because such people do every new country incalculable harm. They read of or hear of a new country that promises well, they think that they cannot more than fail there, as they have everywhere else, and without pausing to consider whether they have about them anything to fit them for success in the country to which they are going or not, they at once hurry off. They fail of course there, as they have elsewhere, and they are the first to go home after having had a pretty hard time in a region which has no possible use for drones or idlers of any sort, and they condemn the country in no measured terms. But the worst of it all is, as a rule, only these men who make failures in a new country ever go back to make any report concerning it. The successful men remain in it, and their

testimony concerning it is seldom or never heard. On the other hand, great weight is attached to the testimony of those who blame the country for their own failure in it. Their opinions are taken as those of men who have spent one, two, or three years in the country, and who are supposed to know much more about it than men who have travelled through it for the express purpose of informing themselves as to its resources and capabilities. The grumbler may have spent his whole time within a prescribed area, while the traveller has gone from one limit of the country to the other. The grumbler bases his judgment on his own experience, while the traveller does his best to obtain the opinions of every intelligent man he meets, and yet in spite of all this, great weight is attached to the evidence of every man who makes a failure in a new country. The people of the older provinces to which they have returned are apt to come to the conclusion that the new country must be bad because "every one who comes back from there tells the same story." But, perhaps, if they could see the country for themselves, and hear the evidence of those who do not come back, they would form very different opinions.

FUTURE MOVEMENTS OF THE PARTY.

To-morrow night we shall probably encamp on the banks of the South Saskatchewan, and on Tuesday afternoon arrive at Fort Carlton, if all goes well. His Excellency has changed one important feature in his programme. He has given up the idea of flat-boating from Fort Calgary down the Saskatchewan and returning through British territory. He will go from Battleford to Calgary, and thence via Fort McLeod and Fort Shaw to Helena, and eastward through the United States. If all goes well I shall follow him to the borders of Canadian territory beyond Fort McLeod, and then visit Edmonton on my return.

THE GUIDE TAKEN ILL.

IN CAMP, GABRIEL DUMONT'S CROSSING, SOUTH SASKATCHEWAN, Aug. 24.—Before daylight this morning I awoke and found Peter Ountois rocking himself backward and forward suffering from a sudden and violent attack of pleurisy. Pulling on my boots and trousers I hurried to call Dr. Sewell, who pronounced the attack a very severe one, but expressed the hope that having been called thus early he would be able to nip it in the bud. By the time we were settled and had the tent closed again it was after three o'clock, and as I lay awake thinking to what possible account I could turn a very sick half-breed guide in this thinly-settled region, where means of transportation are rare and uncertain, and where guides that are even half as good as Peter are extremely hard to find, that relentless bugle sounded and I had to turn out to do Peter's work, bidding him to keep as quiet as possible in the tent till I was ready to pull it down. It is anything but pleasant to turn out of one's blankets just at early dawn on a cold dewy morning, wrestle with the task of building a fire with "dozy" poplar and then tramp knee-deep through the wet grass to catch a pair of mares that do not know enough to come into camp for their breakfast. After bringing in the mares came the

cooking of my own breakfast and, Peter's, and as I never had any partiality for cooking, I am afraid I prepared rather a sorry-looking meal for a sick man to struggle with. Some of the police assisted me in taking down my tent and loading my waggon, and at last I was on the road again, but how far Peter would be able to endure the jolting of the waggon, of course I could not tell. Dr. Sewell's treatment appeared to work like a charm, however, and he has been steadily improving all day. The first twelve or fifteen miles of the day's trip took us through the locality known as the Little Turtle Mountains (no relation to their better known namesakes away to the south-east of this), and here we passed through some of the most charming scenery we have met with on our long journey. In one place, near the middle of this beautiful belt of half-wooded hills, was a lakelet in the summit of a hill. The banks rose twenty or twenty-five feet above the water, and were so thickly overgrown with green poplars and willows that their reflection made a border of deep green all around it so wide that only a small islet of bright blue sky was reflected in its rippleless surface at the centre; and the whole was bordered with a golden fringe of ripened prairie grass. In the splendour of a glorious August morning it looked like a giant gem having one great bright sapphire set in a thick cluster of smaller emeralds, and the whole held together with a cord of gold. As the travellers were passing down out of the pass through the hills a lovely view was opened before them. To the westward lay Big Salt Lake, unquestionably the most beautiful sheet of water I have met with since leaving Rat Portage, its dark blue surface rippleless and glittering in the morning sunlight, with every golden band of prairie grass and every dark green clump of poplars on its high banks faithfully mirrored in its gleaming depths.

At our noon camp while I was getting dinner my mares managed to stray off among the bluffs, and after spending some time in looking for them I was compelled to employ a half-breed freighter, who was camped near us, to hunt them up and bring them to their oats. By this means I was delayed about an hour behind the rest of the party and was a little late in getting into camp to-night, with my mares pretty well fagged out at that. It was rather a discouraging task to set about making camp without help, but I did not work long alone as the members of the escort rendered me every assistance in their power, and before I was through pitching my tent His Excellency happening that way like the good Samaritan that he unquestionably is, invited me to dine with him, while the constable, whose turn it was to cook for the escort, volunteered to prepare Peter's supper for him, so that I was saved from what is to me the most troublesome part of camp duty.

To-night we are camped on the south-east bank of the South Saskatchewan, at what is known as Gabriel Dumont's crossing or ferry. This river at this point is a swift broad stream some 250 yards wide, the bank upon which we are camped presenting an almost sheer descent of 150 feet to the margin of the river. The South Saskatchewan (at this season of the year, at all events) does not show the tawny yellow peculiar to the Red River, the Assiniboine, and other prairie streams which I have met. It presents a grey or drab

appearance, and appears to be very much less muddy than either of the streams to which I have just alluded. The water is falling just now, and this may account for its unusual purity. This stream, it is said, flows through a magnificent country, and is navigable for many hundreds of miles, but as yet no steamer ploughs its swift current. To-night the atmosphere is warm and muggy, and the mosquitoes are so numerous and ferocious that at dinner nearly every one sat with hat on and coat collar turned up to protect neck and head.

A STRANGE INCIDENT.

While His Excellency was still at dinner he was informed that two ladies wished to see him. They turned out to be a mother and daughter, who with their husbands were moving from Portage La Prairie to Edmonton. While they were in camp on the Salt Plain the daughter's first baby was born, and they had come to ask His Excellency to give the little one a name, a request to which he good-naturedly consented, and along with the name gave him a handsome present. The country through which we have travelled to-day, and as much as I could see of it on either side of the trail in the distance, appeared to be the very choicest of land till we came within a mile or two of the river. Here we got into sandy bluffs of poplar, which, though made up of really good land, will in all probability long lie neglected in such a magnificent farming region as this. Along the edge of the river there are some splendid crops growing in this same sandy soil, but I cannot regard it as at all equal to that of the prairie a little farther inland.

It is the intention of Col. Herchmer to take the whole of His Excellency's outfit and escort it over the South Saskatchewan at Fisher's Crossing, which is six miles north-east or down the river from here. As there is only one scow at the lower crossing the ferrying of the whole outfit and escort will take some time (some say all day), and I have made my arrangements to cross at this point so as to reach Duck Lake and Carlton in advance of them.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ACROSS THE SOUTH SASKATCHEWAN RIVER—ARRIVAL AT FORT CARLTON—A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE NORTH-WEST MOUNTED POLICE—THE HUDSON BAY COMPANY—THEIR TRADING POSTS—THE ORGANIZATION AND WORKING OF THE COMPANY.

FORT CARLTON, 525 MILES NORTH-WEST OF WINNIPEG, AND SOME 650 MILES FURTHER NORTH THAN TORONTO, Aug. 25.—I was up in good season this morning, but Peter had so far recovered that he was able to assist me very materially in getting ready for a start. We were soon across the river, and

as I had to work hard on one of the oars in Peter's place, I found myself pretty thoroughly warmed through by the time we had landed on the north-west bank of the river. The drive from this ferry to Duck Lake included nine very long miles, and as I managed to get considerably off the trail at one time I made the whole distance travelled between these two points little if any less than twelve miles. In this region there are many half-breed settlers, and they all appear to be doing well. Their crops are looking well, and there are evidences of a fair share of thrift and prosperity about nearly all their homes. The soil is evidently very rich, and though the land is nearly or quite level it is fairly provided with clumps and groves of young poplar. I tried at several of the settlers' houses to buy oats or barley, but failed in every instance, as little or none of the grain has, as yet, been threshed. I also made several attempts at horse trading, as I was anxious to secure four native ponies to take with me. I found, however, that that terrible disease, the mange, had recently carried off a great many ponies, and as a consequence the supply left was so small that few cared to reduce their limited number of animals. I hurried on to Carlton, hoping to be in camp before His Excellency would have time to reach there.

At Duck Lake, Stobart, Eden & Co. have a portable grist mill with which they are enabled to drive a brisk business. Their trading establishment, which is under the management of Mr. Hughes, is a very extensive one, and large amounts of money and goods are annually turned over in it.

I made a start for Carlton about twelve o'clock, intending to get over a portion of the remaining twelve miles before taking luncheon.

AN INDIAN FARM.

On the road between Duck Lake and Carlton I saw several excellent farms, and among the lot was the farm on the Indian reserve which is worked by the Indians under the direction of the instructor. Here there were some splendid fields of grain to be seen, and altogether the place had a prosperous look. When near Carlton I met a French half-breed who informed me that during the past season the mange had carried off eleven out of his fourteen Indian ponies.

Fort Carlton, a very important post with the Hudson Bay Company, is splendidly situated in the Valley of the North Saskatchewan, the river being at this point about 400 yards wide, with a sandbar of very considerable size in the centre. Less than half an hour after my arrival here an escort of Mounted Police came cantering down to the Fort, quickly followed by ambulances containing His Excellency and suite, and these in turn by the remainder of the outfit. I must admit that I was not a little surprised, not merely with the fact that Col. Herchmer and his men had succeeded with a single scow in bringing over a broad, swift river in five hours an outfit consisting of twenty loaded ambulances, baggage waggons, and other vehicles, and no less than eighty-one horses, but that after this severe task, and after the officers and men of the force had been steadily engaged in such a long and arduous march through the wilderness, they should be able to ride into the fort clean,

pipe-clayed, and in all respects as though they were just out of their barracks, seemed well nigh incredible. And while I am on this subject I desire to say a word of this Mounted Police Force in general. I have now been in company with the escort long enough to be able to form a much more correct opinion of them than have many who have ventured to write in dispraise of them. So far as their soldierly qualities are concerned I could not speak too highly to express my own opinion of them, but I prefer to give the views of those much better capable of judging of them than I am. Col. DeWinton speaks of them as a "really wonderful body of men. They always appear to know just what to do in any emergency and proceed at once to do it." Capt. Chater, after speaking very highly of the creditable appearance the men were able to make on the shortest notice and the admirable marching and campaigning qualities they had shown, alluded particularly to the feat they had performed in crossing the South Saskatchewan in five hours, remarking that he had not known of a regiment in the British army capable of turning out a detachment able to perform a similar feat in the same length of time. He also alluded in the most complimentary terms to the good conduct of the men. Bad language was not heard in the ranks, and when anything was to be done it was done promptly and quietly without any noise or shouting. He thought that the conduct and management of the men reflected the highest credit upon Col. Herchmer and the non-commissioned officers in charge. Capt. Percival, who, like Capt. Chater, has seen a good deal of active service within the past few years, also spoke in the highest terms of the officers and men of the Mounted Police, summing up with the remark, "a most wonderful force; they combine all the handiness of sailors with the smartness of soldiers."

During his stay at Fort Carlton His Excellency was the guest of Mr. Lawrence Clark, Chief Factor of the Hudson Bay Company for the Carlton District. To-morrow the Governor-General's formal reception will take place here. This being one of the most important trading posts in the North-West it may not be out of place to give in this connection some facts which I have been able to collect relative to the organization and working of the Hudson Bay Company. The company was organized in the reign of Charles II., and is now 211 years old. The charter was granted to Prince Rupert under the style and title of "The Company of Gentlemen Adventurers Trading in Hudson Bay." The charter gave them sole right and privilege of acquiring proprietary rights in that portion of the territories "whose waters fall into Hudson Bay." They had the right of proclaiming laws for the government of the country, and enforcing them by such organization, whether of a civil or military character, as they may determine. They had the power of life and death in their hands and the right by their senior officers of solemnizing marriage, which marriages were acknowledged as legally binding by the laws of England as if performed by the Archbishop of Canterbury. They also had the power of excluding all trespassers upon their domain, and the sole right of trade of every description within their boundaries. The organization of the Company consisted of two classes of partners, the distinction being, first,

the shareholders in England, who provided the capital to carry on the trade of the country. The second class of partners were styled and known as "winter partners," and participated in an allotted annual share of the profits derived from the trade. The distinction between the two classes was that the "shareholders" possessed proprietary rights in the acquired territories under their charter, besides receiving their share of the annual profits of the trade. The "winter partners," on the other hand, possessed no vested rights in the Company, but were men promoted on account of long service as clerks, and from their knowledge, experience, and ability to carry on the business of the Company placed under their supervision in the territories. The present organization of the trade in the territories generally called the "fur trade," consists of several grades or ranks, the highest rank being that of chief commissioner, who is appointed directly by the Governor and Committee of the Hudson Bay Company in England, representing the general body of shareholders of the Company. This official is jointly paid by the shareholders and the winter partners. His duties are of a very extensive nature. He is the President of the Great Fur Trade Council, which is held annually on the 1st of July at Fort Carlton. The members of this Council are the heads of the numerous trading districts throughout the country. At this Council the whole trading business of the Company is discussed, and measures are decided upon as are thought most conducive to prosperous results. The actual members of the Council by right of rank are the Chief Factors, of whom there are eight, and the Factors, of whom there are twenty. The subordinate winter partners are chief traders, of whom there are ten, and the junior chief traders, of whom there are twenty-five, have no right to sit and vote at Council, except on the invitation of the President and members.

The several grades of commissioned officers known as winter partners participate in the profits as follows:—One hundred shares of the annual profits are divided *pro rata* thus:—A chief factor receives $2\frac{1}{2}$ shares, a factor 2 shares, a chief trader $1\frac{1}{2}$ shares, and a junior chief trader 1 share. The lower or paid division of the Company's service consists also of several grades. The lowest grade of office is that of an apprenticed post-master, who serves an apprenticeship of five years, at the expiration of which he is promoted to the rank of post-master, which is the second grade. The duties of post-masters consist of looking after the labourers who are employed around the post and acting as the means of communication between the Indians and the officer in charge of the post or trading establishment, nearly always speaking some dialect of the Indian language. The third class are boys from 16 to 17 years of age, the sons of gentlemen, who have received a good school education and are enlisted in the service as apprenticed clerks. After three years' trial they are promoted to the rank and emoluments of full clerks, and for a further period of three years are under the control and direction of the officer in charge of a district, whose duty it is to watch their characters closely, give them as good a business training as possible, and fit them for the higher ranks of the service, promotion to which rank entirely depends upon the good

conduct, moral character, and administrative abilities possessed by the aspirant.

The trade in the northern districts where the land is wholly unfit for agricultural purposes consists entirely of furs and skins, but in the frontier districts which are being rapidly settled by immigration from Old Canada and the Mother Country, the fur trade is all but extinguished, and the business of the Company in these districts is nearly or quite a general custom trade. The Company has steam grist and saw mills in all these latter districts. Grain and other farm produce are purchased largely from the surrounding farming population, and they retail the flour and other country produce to the incoming settlers and others not engaged in agriculture. From this source also is the food supply of their more northern or fur-bearing districts obtained.

The posts of the Hudson Bay Company extend from Labrador to the foot of the Rocky Mountains, from Lake Superior to James' Bay, from Lake Winnipeg to Churchill on Hudson Bay, from the mouth of the Saskatchewan to the Arctic Ocean, along the whole extent of the Peace River Valley, and from the west side of the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific coast. There is also a line of posts from the boundaries of Manitoba to the valley of the Qu'Appelle and Touchwood Hills, besides extending south to the American boundary. Before the treaty, and when the Blackfeet and Crees were carrying on a protracted warfare, times here were not always peaceful and quiet, and the present fort, though not a very old one, is surrounded by a high and strong wooden stockade. Since the treaty, however, there has been no trouble with the Indians here, and everything has gone on very smoothly and satisfactorily.

CHAPTER XIX.

AN OLD CHIEF EXPRESSES THE WANTS OF HIS PEOPLE—DOWN THE SASKATCHEWAN TO PRINCE ALBERT—CORDIAL WELCOME BY THE SETTLERS—THE "LOUISE" SCHOLARSHIP TO BE ESTABLISHED.

H. B. COMPANY'S STEAMER "NORTHCOTE," NORTH SASKATCHEWAN RIVER, BETWEEN FORT CARLTON AND PRINCE ALBERT, Aug. 26.—There was not a very large, but decidedly influential gathering, of Indians assembled to meet His Excellency at Carlton this morning. The assembly was entirely of chiefs and head men. The rank and file being engaged in harvesting, were encouraged to stick to it; and leave their representatives to meet and counsel with the Governor-General.

After the white men's address had been delivered and His Excellency had replied, Mistawassiss (Big Child), one of the oldest and most powerful chiefs of the Cree nation, spoke something as follows :—

"I am glad that God has permitted me to meet the Governor. I feel flattered that it was a Governor who put this medal on my neck. I did not put it on myself. We are the children of the Great Mother, and we wish that through her representative, our brother-in-law, she would listen for a little while to our complaints and sympathise with our sufferings. I have no great complaints to make, but I wish to make just a few remarks concerning our property. The kindness that has been shown to us is great, but in our eyes it is not quite enough to put us on our feet. In days gone by the buffalo was our wealth and our strength, but he has left us. In those days we used the horse with which to chase the buffalo; and when the buffalo left us we thought we might use the horse with which to follow after other game, but we have lost many of our ponies with the mange and we have had to sell others, and when I look around me and see that the buffaloes are gone and that our ponies are no longer left to us, I think I and my people are poor indeed. The white man knows whence his strength comes; and we know where we require more strength. The strength to harvest the crop is in animals and implements, and we have not enough of these. If our crops should be enough to keep us alive we would not have the means with which to harvest them. We would very much like more working cattle and more farming implements. I would beg also that if possible a grist mill should be put up somewhere within our reach, so that we can have our wheat ground into flour and our other crops ground. I do not speak for myself, but those poor people behind me. (Loud grunts of applause and approval.) I am very thankful that I am able to see the Governor-General in my old days. He has come just in time that I may see him before I die. Many a time have I been in terrible straits for food for myself and my people, but I have never yet been angry about it; for I knew the Indian Agent was a good friend to us, and that he always acted on the instructions left for him, which he was bound to obey. Often have I been sorely perplexed and miserable at seeing my people starving and shrunken in flesh till they were so weak that with the first cold striking them they would fall off their feet, and then nothing would save them. We want teachers to instruct and educate our children; we want guns and traps and nets to help us to get ready for the winter. We try to do all that the farm instructor has told us, and we are doing the best we can, but, as I said before, we want farming implements. I do not speak for myself, as I am getting old, and it does not much matter for me, but I speak for my people and for my children and grandchildren, who must starve if they do not receive the help that they so much need."

The remarks of Mistawassiss were received with loud applause. He is one of the oldest and most powerful chiefs of the great Cree nation. Though small in stature he was a great man among them in the old days when they were at war with the Blackfeet, and now since the treaty his counsel has more weight with his people than that of any other man. He is no longer

a savage, and makes no display of scalps, feathers, or ornaments of savagery. He is a devout Presbyterian, and those who know him best say that he is a thoroughly conscientious and pure-minded man. After Mistawassiss had finished, "Atakoop" (Star Blanket), spoke at some length, but his speech was in all respects a much inferior effort to that of "Big Child," and then several others followed, and altogether the pow-wow was kept up for a long time.

His Excellency told them in reply that the Great Mother had many white children who were very poor, some of whom thought she was giving to the red man more than their share. She would gladly give them all that they needed, but she had so many poor children who needed assistance that she could not always do as much for them as she would wish to. He had noticed, however, that some of their requests contained certain practical suggestions, and he would endeavour to see if some assistance could not be given them in that particular direction. His Excellency then presented Big Child and Star Blanket with beautiful silver medals with medallion busts of the Princess and himself. One of the richest and most gorgeous Indian dresses I have ever seen was worn by the great Sioux Chief White Cap. He wore a beautiful snow-white tunic of fine caribou skin, richly ornamented with porcupine quills, coloured silk, and bead work. From his shoulders hung some twenty or thirty scalps taken in the horrible Minnesota massacre.

PROVISIONS UP.

We are now getting far enough from Winnipeg so that the increase in the cost of staple articles is very noticeable. To-day I bought hard tack at thirty-seven and a half cents per pound; the same article sells in Winnipeg at seven cents per pound. Oats are unobtainable in Carlton, and this reminds me of the fact that I have at last succeeded in disposing of my mares and replacing them with "native ponies," as they are called in Winnipeg; "Shaganappies," as they are called at Fort Ellice; and "Kyuses," as they are called at Qu'Appelle and westward. Though I was forced to pay more boot money than I thought the real difference in the price of the ponies and my mares, I do not know that the bargain is a very bad one. I get four animals for two, and fresh ponies for tired horses. As my ponies are doubtless destined to play an important part in the drama of my journeyings through the North-West, the reader will permit me to introduce them to him before I go any farther with my journal.

"Blanshi" is a four year old filly about thirteen and a half hands high, deep through the heart, with a large well rounded barrel and massive finely moulded quarters, having hocks and stifles remarkably well let down. Though her hocks are uncommonly clean and well formed (being entirely free from any predisposition to curb) her hind legs are exceptionally crooked looking almost like those of a rabbit. She is a light fawn colour (neither buckskin nor cream) has broad blaze, four white stockings, and odd looking pinto markings along her gascons, flanks and lower jaw. She is very sprightly in disposition and promises to be an excellent driver. Her mate, "Touchwood,"

is perhaps half an inch taller but not so stout. He is a dark bay with two white fetlocks, and a star and snip. He too is very spirited. "Punch" lacks about half an inch of being as tall as Blanche, but he has an uncommonly long heavy barrel, with massive well rounded quarters. He is a rich bay with a broad blaze and three white stockings. He can travel at a capital pace when he likes, but he is shockingly lazy. Punch's mate, "Sandy," is rather a large sized slabsided dark roan pony, four years old and a pacer. He is as lazy as Punch, which is saying a good deal for him, and altogether I like him least of the four.

These ponies are of western origin and are wholly unlike the cat-hamed, cow-hocked starvelings which were shown me as "Red River Ponies" in Winnipeg. These kysuses have plenty of bone and are in all respects hardy active and useful animals.

OFF TO PRINCE ALBERT.

After the pow-wow was over to-day His Excellency and party took the Hudson Bay Company's steamer *Northcote* to go down the Saskatchewan (which here flows north and east) to Prince Albert, and in the meantime the outfit was sent on up the river (westward) to the Battleford. Being invited both by Col. de Winton on behalf of His Excellency, and by Chief Factor Clarke on behalf of the Hudson Bay Company, to make the journey down the river per steamer *Northcote* to Prince Albert, and afterwards up the river to Battleford per steamer *Lily*, I decided to avail myself of the opportunity thus afforded of a long journey on one of the great rivers of the North-West, and I accordingly started Peter and the ponies off after the escort, while I took the steamer *Northcote* with the Vice-Regal party on board, as well as a number of passengers bound for Winnipeg. The steamer *Northcote* is a broad, flat bottomed "stern wheeler," about 130 feet long, drawing some 22 inches of water, and driven by two horizontal high-pressure engines, the combined power of which is about three hundred horse. She is of the regular Mississippi and Missouri pattern, with fore-castle cut down to the "main" or "boiler deck."

The North Saskatchewan is a swift and in places a rather shallow stream, full of ever-shifting sand-bars. In some respects it is very much like the Mississippi. Every season, and indeed every month, the channel changes more or less. Every now and then the steam-boat channel near Carlton runs directly through the spot where there stood an island upon which, less than thirty years ago, the employees of the Hudson Bay Company at the fort used to chop cordwood. Indeed, scarcely a season passes in which some island does not disappear, while others are every year being called into existence. This afternoon I noticed pine and spruce on the banks of the river, the first we have seen for a long time. There are also some few maples (and I believe, elms) to be seen along this river. I was shown a low-lying island this evening upon which an Indian woman and her family were drowned by a sudden and unexpected rise in the river while they were engaged in making sugar. As it is impossible to navigate this portion of the river in the night,

the *Northcote* is tied up at the bank to-night, about three hours' run above (or south-west of) Prince Albert.

STEAMER "LILY," TIED UP TO SOUTH-EAST BANK OF NORTH SASKATCHEWAN RIVER, BETWEEN PRINCE ALBERT AND FORT CARLTON, EN ROUTE TO BATTLEFORD, Aug. 27.

A CORDIAL WELCOME.

This has been rather a busy day for His Excellency and party. With the light of the first grey dawn the *Northcote* was steaming rapidly down the swift current, and reached Prince Albert before most of the inhabitants were stirring, as they had remained up rather late on Friday night expecting the arrival of Lord Lorne and suite, but as they were disappointed in that they supposed he would not leave Fort Carlton till this morning. There were some few waiting on the bank when the steamer arrived, however, and though the rain began to pour down in torrents there was a large crowd collected very soon after the *Northcote* had landed. The Bishop of Saskatchewan was one of the first to come on board of the steamer and welcome His Excellency to Prince Albert as well as invite the party up to the college under his care to luncheon. The citizens of Prince Albert were soon out in force, but the rain was pouring down at such a rate that it was impossible to present the address on the dais behind the beautiful arch which had been prepared for His Excellency's reception.

After the reading of the address His Excellency made a brief but appropriate reply, after which the whole party took carriages and drove down to the residence of the Bishop at the college, where an address was presented.

His Excellency made an extemporaneous reply in his happiest vein, after which Chief Factor Clarke, of the Hudson Bay Company, on behalf of the members of the diocese, presented the Bishop with a purse of \$300 for the founding of a scholarship which, with His Excellency's permission, was to be designated the "Louise" scholarship. His Excellency assured the donors that he was sure Her Royal Highness would only be too glad to have her name associated with so laudable a project, after which the Bishop thanked him and them in a few brief and feeling sentences and the party adjourned to the dining-room and sat down to an excellent luncheon. After luncheon the party were driven back to the landing and embarked on the Hudson Bay Company's steamer *Lily*, bound up the river for Carlton and Battleford.

During our short stay at Prince Albert I was enabled to collect a little information regarding this, one of the most important and interesting settlements in the great North-West. This place is the highest latitude we have reached in our trip, being nearly or quite 700 miles further north than Toronto, and over 1,300 miles further west, making the distance between the two points something over 2,000 miles by an air line, but by the route we have travelled the distance is, of course considerably greater. The settlement, or rather the aggregation of settlements, included in the Prince Albert District (extending from Fort Carlton down to the junction of the north and south branches of the Saskatchewan) includes a strip of territory about 80

miles east and west by 50 miles north and south. This district contains a white and half-breed population of about 3,000 souls. Here there are about 10,000 acres under crop and fully 5,000 acres newly broken this year, the latter figure furnishing the reader with some idea of the rapidity with which settlers have been flocking in within the last year. The town of Prince Albert may be designated as about four miles long by half-a-mile wide along the south bank of the North Saskatchewan. The town is situated on a plateau considerably above high-water mark in the river, and is bounded on the south by a narrow and shallow ravine, beyond which rises another bench or bluff to the level of the surrounding prairie, which is considerably higher than the plateau upon which the town stands. The population of Prince Albert proper is about 800, but some idea of its rapid growth may be obtained from the fact that there are now no less than thirty-one buildings in course of erection in the town, and many others who are intending to build are merely waiting to secure the services of carpenters, which are in great demand just now. The buildings are, many of them, constructed on a somewhat novel principle. A strong frame of timbers is erected, of a kind similar to that used by Ontario farmers in building their barns, and as soon as the frame is up, instead of being sheeted or studded and clapboarded, the space between the timbers are filled in with hewn logs carefully fitted together. The "chinks" are then plastered in the same manner as are those of a log house, and the inner walls are lathed and plastered like those of an ordinary house. This makes a very warm and an extremely durable building.

While at luncheon I had the good fortune to be placed beside Mr. Wm. Miller, formerly of the county of Bruce, who has been farming in this part of the North-West about eight years, and from him and others who were within talking distance I was enabled to obtain some very moderate, candid, and wholly uncoloured statements relative to the agricultural capabilities of this region. The average product of oats, one year with another, they set down at 45 bushels to the acre, and the average weight to the measured bushel 36 lbs. The average product of barley is 40 bushels to the acre, which is invariably fully up to the standard weight. The average crop of spring wheat is from 25 to 30 bushels to the acre, and this would average from 61 to 62 pounds to the measured bushel. All sorts of root crops turn out magnificently. Timothy grows well, but of course for many years to come farmers will place most dependence on native grasses for their fodder, the wild pea vine furnishing forage that is reckoned nearly or quite as good for horses and cattle as oats in the straw. They hold that, notwithstanding the long and sharp winters, this country is especially well adapted for stock-raising. Mr. Miller informed me that last year his young cattle, though fed hay, were not sheltered during the winter, and yet they were in capital order in the spring. "I have often seen," said he, "cattle killed for beef that were much thinner than they were." Mr. McBeth informed me that he and others had done the same thing with similar results for years past. Sheep, horses and cows all do well here, but parties bringing in sheep from the east should be careful to drive them up from Manitoba before the wild

rice ripens, as the spine-like bearded shuck of the rice, which grows in many places along the trail (though not in this settlement), is liable to get into the wool, and work its way through into the flesh, so as to kill the animal.

THE PRESBYTERIAN MISSION.

A large portion of the town of Prince Albert is being built on what is known as the Presbyterian Mission property, and as the lots are sold with building conditions, this part of the town is being very rapidly improved. The settlement of Prince Albert began about fourteen years ago with the Presbyterian Indian Mission of which the late Mr. Nesbitt was the first missionary. For fourteen years the Presbyterian Church has maintained his school and until recently it has been taught by the resident missionary, but it is now under the direction of Miss Baker, a lady holding first-class certificates from both Montreal and Chicago. There are sixty names on the roll, and an average attendance of forty-six. There are four Presbyterian churches in the settlement to be opened this autumn, one of these (the one in town) being built of brick and heated by a hot air furnace. At present the Rev. James Sieveright is the home missionary now here, but there are two more on the way from Ontario, one of whom will assist Mr. Sieveright here, and the other will go to Fort Edmonton. There are also two native Presbyterian missionaries in the territory. One of these is stationed at Fort Pelly, and the other is on Mestawassiss' Reserve, twenty miles north of Carlton.

EARLY FROSTS.

Of course a great point is made against this region by citing cases where the crops have been damaged by early frosts, but I am inclined to think that the reports concerning this evil have been greatly exaggerated. Mr. Miller informed me that though he had been farming here for eight years he had never lost any part of his crop through early frosts. He does all his ploughing and sows his wheat late in the fall. In this way the wheat does not germinate till the following spring, but as soon as the frost is out of the surface of the ground the wheat begins to grow and is really well on the way before it could be put in the ground under the ordinary system of spring ploughing. Last year there was a pretty sharp frost about the 25th or 27th of August, but Mr. Miller sold his whole crop of wheat at \$1 75 per bushel.

DRAWBACKS.

Though there are many things favourable to the progress and growth of Prince Albert, it has, like many another promising settlement, some very serious drawbacks which, though in most cases quite remediable, ought not to quite escape the notice of the intending settler. Freightage to this point is slow and expensive owing to the fact that there are only two steamers on the Saskatchewan (both the property of the Hudson Bay Company), performing the service between Grand Rapids which is, roughly estimated, about 300 miles (by the river) east of this point and Edmonton, which is about 700 miles (by the river) westward. These steamers, so say the Prince Albert

people, have all they can do carrying freight for the Hudson Bay Co., and the Government and independent traders experience considerable difficulty in having their freight delivered with anything like promptitude. The prices which have been quoted to me, and which I subjoin, are, I fancy, somewhat higher than the real average, but it is evident that there is room for improvement in the freighting facilities between Prince Albert and Winnipeg. Salt is quoted as selling at \$75 per bbl.; kerosene oil never less than \$2.75, and sometimes as high as \$3 per gallon. Sugar 25c per pound.

The steamer *Lily*, on which we are embarked, is of the same pattern as the *Northcote* already described, but of considerably smaller dimensions. She is only 100 feet long, is Clyde built, of Bessemer steel, and sheeted outside the plates with spruce planking on the bottom. On the fore-castle deck she (like the *Northcote*) carries huge spars and tackle for the purpose of "walking" or pushing her off a sand bar or over a shoal when she has run aground. These huge spars give her something the appearance of a giant spider or grasshopper afloat on the river with his legs drawn up ready to spring ashore, or upon a bar, whenever the spirit moves him to do so. To-night we steamed up the river till dark, and then the steamer's prow was run upon the bank and her hawser was made fast to a tree to hold her till morning. The weather is delightfully cool and fresh this evening, and there is not a mosquito to be heard or seen.

CHAPTER XX.

VOYAGE UP THE NORTH SASKATCHEWAN—ARRIVAL AT BATTLEFORD—RESOURCES OF THE COUNTRY.

BATTLEFORD, Aug. 30.—All day Sunday and yesterday the *Lily* was steaming against the swift current of this noble river, her passengers greatly enjoying the beautiful scenery, each bend in the river opening up a view that seemed more charming than the last. But it would be impossible by any pen-picture to give the reader an idea of the wondrous beauties of this great prairie stream. Indeed, I cannot but feel as if a very grave responsibility rested with me when I reflect upon the nature of the task that this journey has imposed upon me. No one who has not visited this country can have the faintest conception of its gigantic extent and resources, and I cannot hope in one series of letters to set it before the reader in anything like its true colours. So little is known and believed of this country in old Canada I should fear that the unsupported testimony of one traveller through this great fertile wilderness might be set down as the ravings of an enthusiast.

That I have not overstated the character of the country through which we have travelled. I would ask the reader to look for proof in some of Lord Lorne's replies to the addresses that have been presented to him. His Excellency is no flippant talker, anxious only to make a favourable impression upon those who for the time being happen to be his audience, but a very earnest thinker and worker. (This is no mere holiday pleasure trip so far as he and his party are concerned, but a careful "voyage of discovery and investigation," if I might so use the term. He himself and all those with him are hard at work, and everything—pleasure, and even comfort—are made subservient to the real business of the journey, the thorough investigation of the character and resources of the country, and the condition, wants and necessities of its inhabitants both white and red.

The journey up the north Saskatchewan has been in every respect a delightful one. The broad, swift river winding through park-like scenery of surpassing loveliness is ever unfolding pictures whose wondrous beauty no pen could describe. From the roseate misty sunrise to the moment when a glorious August sun sinks to rest in his couch in the west that is fringed with golden prairie grass and curtained with amber and crimson and purple, the eye never tires of the grand panorama.

From Prince Albert to Battleford the river is bordered on either side with rich prairie land. The bottoms in the valley of the river, which are for the most part rather narrow, and the numerous islands in the stream, are well wooded, but on the "benches" or uplands the character of the prairie appears to be much the same as that through which we have already passed. Yesterday the steamer was run up to the bank to allow the travellers to go ashore and inspect the curious lot of caves and subterranean passages that appear to have at some time or another been burrowed in the north bank. These holes in the bank are not unlike what might have been made by a colony of badgers, except that they are large enough to permit a man to crawl through the greater part of the system, all being connected so as to form 8 subterranean passages extending more than a hundred feet inland, where they connect with a number of vertical holes opening to the surface of the prairie. Col. De Winton and Capt. Bagot made some rather extensive subterranean explorations here, but failed to discover anything that would throw light upon the primary cause of this curious phenomenon. While examining the clay on the face of the bank, which is broken off so as to present a sheer descent of some twenty or thirty feet, His Excellency discovered a large tooth which might pass for that of a buffalo; except that it was embedded in the solid clay some twelve or fifteen feet below the surface. Another of the party found a piece of a rib about eight or ten inches long and some three-quarters of an inch wide buried for almost its whole length in the dry clay. This latter discovery was twenty-five or thirty feet west of the spot where His Excellency found the tooth and about eight feet below the surface. Other pieces of rib were also found lying loose in the clay which had fallen off and was lying about the base of the embankment. Both the tooth and pieces of bone were so friable that it was with difficulty they were prevented from crumbling to pieces on being handled.

ARRIVING AT BATTLEFORD.

Early this morning the white walls of the Government House of the North West Territories were to be seen from the deck of the *Lily*, but it was still ten miles distant and breakfast was over before the steamer had reached her landing. Governor Laird was waiting on the bank with a handsome Brett and pair to convey His Excellency to Government House. Carriages for other members of the party and an escort of Mounted Police were also in waiting. All the travellers were at once lodged comfortably at Government House and with Col. Richardson, Stipendiary Magistrate, and Mr. Forget, Secretary of State.

In the afternoon a large number of the leading citizens of Battleford assembled in the Chamber of the North-West Council at Government House, when Mr. Young, one of the leading merchants, presented an address of welcome.

After the address and the reply His Excellency and party adjourned to the private part of Government House, and taking seats on the verandah awaited the arrival of the Indians who, as is too often the case, made numerous complaints about their extreme poverty, coupled with some extraordinary requests. The great trouble with all these Indians who are attempting to farm is that they have neither enough of working oxen nor farming implements on their reserves to enable them to carry on their operations profitably.

BATTLEFORD, Aug 31.—My journal yesterday closed with a very brief notice of the Indian pow-wow, which was very much like all the others that have been held along the line of travel taken by His Excellency. I do not mean to say that there are not some important sides of the Indian question brought out at these pow-wows, and I shall, when I have had a little more time to observe, have something to say upon what strikes me as important features of the Indian question; but the average chief embodies so much utterly uninteresting verbose nonsense in the introduction to his speech that it is very tedious to listen to the interpreter wading through it. Yesterday afternoon and to-day I have spent a considerable time in riding and walking about for the purpose of learning as much as I could about Battleford.

This place is certainly one of the most beautiful and picturesque in the North-West, and if ever there was a spot which nature intended for the site of a city it is Battleford. The steamboat landing on the Saskatchewan is two or three miles west of where Battle River falls into the larger stream, but for a long way (several miles at least above this) the general direction of the two streams is parallel, though the strip of land between them is seldom above two miles and a half, and in places less than three-quarters of a mile wide. This strip of land between the two rivers consists of a beautiful plateau of fine, smooth upland prairie. Its highest portion is along its centre, midway between the two streams, and it slopes away gently toward each. The lowest portion of this plateau is fifteen or twenty feet above the narrow strips of bottom land along both rivers, which latter in times of spring floods are sometimes partially submerged. On the other hand the highest portion

of this plateau (which the reader will have already identified as the site of the future city of Battleford) is considerably lower than the level of the prairie bluffs which rise beyond the Saskatchewan on the north and Battle River on the south. Here is a spot which would be easily drained by sewers falling each way from the central ridge; the whole outer boundary would be river frontage, at which the Saskatchewan steamers could land at nearly all times, while the smaller craft which would be required to navigate Battle River could perform the service from the forks when the larger steamers could not ascend on the south side of the peninsula with safety. With a city located on this peninsular plateau (which is now only occupied by the barracks of the Mounted Police), the south bank of Battle River and the north bank of the Saskatchewan (about four miles apart) would afford the most charming situations for villa and suburban residences. Of course, it may appear somewhat premature to be talking about suburban residences in a locality where the lands are not in the market, nor even surveyed, but there will be many prosperous cities in this great North-West in the near future, and certainly Battleford appears to be about as favourably located for a great trading centre as any point I have yet seen.

Regarding the country in the immediate vicinity of Battleford; I am quite aware that what I have to say flatly contradicts what appears to me to be the general impression concerning it. Before coming here I was told that Battleford was in the midst of a sterile, dreary waste of sand, but I wish we had a few hundred square miles of just such dreary wastes of sand in Ontario and Quebec. The soil is not the deep, black loam which I have seen in some other portions of the North-West, but at the same time, that it is not unproductive I shall presently produce abundant proof. It is a rich and very friable soil, in which there is unquestionably some sand, but for all that it is deep, strong, warm, and extremely productive. I should have stated before that the few houses (beyond the houses of Government officials, which are on the crest of the beautiful high bluff south of Battle River) are located on a rather narrow strip of bottom land south of the smaller stream, and the plateau to which I have already referred is the site of the future city.

NATURE'S BOUNTIFUL PROFUSION.

The first crop that I noticed was in the garden of Mr. P. G. Laurie, editor and proprietor of the Saskatchewan *Herald*. Here I saw beautiful flowers, such as pansies, pinks, etc., growing luxuriantly and blooming in the richest profusion. Native black currants had grown and matured to the size of large cherries, while there were to be seen some of the largest and finest cabbages, cauliflowers and turnips that I have ever seen, and in saying this I do not exclude from the comparison anything that I have seen shown at Provincial and State Fairs in Canada and the United States. I had been told of the short seasons, backward springs, early frosts, and all that sort of thing, in this region, and so I enquired to what extent Mr. Laurie had started his products indoors or under glass. The Ontario gardener will perhaps appreciate my surprise when he informed me that he had not *spouted a seed indoors nor*

under glass. Even these splendid cauliflowers and cabbages had been *grown from the seed in the open air*. Mr. Laurie's turnips, potatoes, carrots, and other roots were all proportionately good, and, though I did not inspect other gardens as closely, I have good reasons to believe that the gardens in the uplands are equally good. The people of Battleford have been using cauliflowers for a month past, and commenced using new potatoes and green peas on the first of July.

One of the first farms I visited was that of Mr. Forget, and here I saw fields of wheat and oats far above the average of what one finds in the most prosperous sections of Old Canada.

On the farm of the McFarlane Bros., only a few miles from the village, I saw a field of standing oats that will certainly yield fifty-five bushels to the acre, while some who are much better qualified to judge than I am say that it will in all probability give a crop this season which will go not less than sixty bushels to the acre. Last year the same field yielded a crop of fifty-seven bushels of oats to the acre, and every one who has seen the two crops says that this season's crop looks considerably better standing than did last year's. Oats here are particularly plump, and all through this region I am told that the oats weigh from thirty-six to thirty-eight pounds, and often as high as forty pounds, to the measured bushel. Spring wheat yields from thirty-five to 40 bushels to the acre, and the field that I saw on the Messrs. McFarlane's farm, as well as that on Mr. Forget's, would yield very little, if any, below the last-mentioned figure, and it must be remembered that Mr. Forget's wheat was sown upon newly-broken sod. The wheat here is also remarkably well-filled and plump, good samples weighing sixty-four pounds and over to the measured bushel. The wheat here was sown in the Spring.

The Messrs. McFarlane have but thirty-five acres under crop, though they have been farming here for five years. In fact grain growing is not the primary object they have in view. They commenced with about \$500 capital, and they are working themselves slowly into the business of horse ranching. So far they have made it pay very well, but, of course, their operations are very limited. They have now on hand thirty head of horses, ponies, mares and colts, and sixteen head of horned cattle. As I shall have occasion later on to have something to say concerning horse-breeding in the North-West, I shall for the present drop the subject with the mere mention of the McFarlane Bros.' operations in this direction.

Another farmer with whom I had some conversation here, was Mr. Finlayson, formerly of Glencoe, Ontario, and who, prior to settling here, served in the Mounted Police Force. He came to this country with little or nothing, but now has seventy-two acres under crop, and has broken thirty acres more this season. In the spring of 1880 he ploughed the first furrow in his farm. Last year (1880) cropping off sod broken that same spring, his wheat yielded twenty bushels to the acre, and his oats thirty-eight bushels to the acre. His crops of wheat this year will be from thirty to thirty-five bushels to the acre, while his oats will yield fully fifty bushels to the acre. He has now five head of cattle and five horses.

THE CLIMATE.

Regarding the climate here, all agree that the winters are extremely cold, but every one with whom I have conversed who has wintered here says that the cold is not by any means so disagreeable or unendurable as the readings of the thermometer would indicate. In the winter of 1878-9 Mr. Finlayson was delivering wood at the Montreal Police barracks here, and was driving for miles across the prairie every day, and yet during that whole winter he only lost one day and a half on account of bad weather. That same season he was ploughing on the 2nd of April. Spring ploughing usually commences here from the 1st to the 15th of April. The average yield of barley here last year was forty bushels to the acre, and the crop promises to be equally good if not better this year.

The Messrs. McFarlane, who as I have already stated, make a business of raising horses, tell me that their ponies run out and pick their living all winter, and they come out in fine order in the spring. They only stable them about three days before commencing spring work.

As yet I believe no sheep have been brought to Battleford.

His Excellency's stay in Battleford comes to a close to-morrow morning, when, with about fifty fresh horses and twenty-five of those brought from Qu'Appelle, he sets out in a south-westerly course across the prairies for Fort Calgary. This afternoon he visited the extensive and commodious barracks of the Mounted Police here, and this evening, as last evening, meets a number of the Battleford people at dinner at the Government House, where Governor Laird has been sparing no pains to make his stay in Battleford, as well as that of the whole party, as enjoyable as possible. Indeed the people of Battleford have all been extremely courteous and hospitable in their treatment of the visitors, and it is safe to say that not one of the party will go away without the pleasantest recollections of their stay here. This afternoon Mr. Sidney Hall (who, by the way, is a most industrious worker) made a sketch of a charming little bit of scenery on the Battle River from the lawn in front of Mr. Forget's cottage.

CHAPTER XXI.

OFF FOR CALGARY—A DREARY NIGHT ON THE PLAINS—AN OPTICAL ILLUSION—FOLLOWING A DIM TRAIL.

ON THE PLAINS WEST OF BATTLEFORD, *en route* to Fort Calgary, Sept. 1. —The Vice-Regal party got away long ahead of me, owing to the fact that my ponies had gone astray. My chances of picking them up seemed very

alim, my start from Battleford being nearly half a day behind that of His Excellency, who, I ought to have stated before, drove out from the city with Governor Laird, in the latter's carriage, it being the Lieutenant-Governor's intention to accompany his distinguished guest a short distance on the way. Having at last got off we bowled along at a rapid rate for about three hours, when we reached the foot of a low pass through the hills, where, in a deep valley, shut in by bare rounded knolls or mounds some two hundred feet high, I found His Excellency's midday camp. This point is probably about ten miles south-west of Battleford. The first three miles of the trip were among poplar bluffs, which appear to be growing in light, friable, but very rich and productive soil. I formed my opinion as to the richness of the region from the character of luxuriant grass and vigorous growth of furze, prairie roses, and young poplars, rather than from the appearance of the soil itself, which looked rather more sandy than one would expect to find it if he judged by the character of its products, all of which were very healthy and vigorous. After passing out of the region of poplar clumps the trail leads through fine open prairie growing rich grasses of various sorts, and this continues up to the valley already mentioned, through which a rather sluggish little stream of a slightly alkaline taste flows. We made rather slow progress through what I supposed to be a portion of the low range known as the "Eagle Hills," and before we had particularly noticed the character of the change, suddenly found ourselves some miles out on a great stretch of prairie without as much as a tuft of wolf willows in sight. The situation was fast becoming interesting. We were making our way out over a great plain which, for aught we knew, might be a hundred miles in breadth. The sun was down and the young moon promised only a small supplement to the light of the fading day by which we were to pursue our journey. The trail too was only a dim one at best, over the sun-dried surface of the unbroken prairie, and for the last mile or two we had not seen a slough that was not strongly suggestive of alkali. To camp within reach of one of these might nearly or quite ruin my ponies, and leave us helpless on the prairie, so that no choice was left us but to push on and, if possible, reach His Excellency's party before camping. We halted, and just as the last rays of daylight were fading in the west, we turned the ponies out for a short feed and rest preparatory to our final "hitch," which was to be driven by moonlight. Already the west wind was piping shrilly through the dry grass on the great plain, out of which rose away to the southward the dark outline of low ridges like the backs of sleeping monsters of a pre-historic age. In the west still hung a streak of pale, straw-coloured light, where but a few moments before the sky was all aglow with orange and amber, and in the south, in a sky of unclouded blue, hung the silver crescent that was to light us on our way. The night wind was keen and frosty, and as it went sweeping over us the ponies huddled closely together, as if they, too, felt the oppressive loneliness of the hour.

Peter soon had Blanche and Touchwood in harness, and buttoning my overcoat closely under my chin I once more mounted the waggon, and we

were off again. I had now been without sleep for thirty-six hours, and I was suddenly so overcome with drowsiness that I came near falling out of the waggon. Peter, fearing that I might do so, suggested that we should camp at once, but I hit upon a plan for obviating the necessity of a stop on my account. I took one of the ponies' leather circingles, and, passing it around my waist, buckled it to one of the ropes that held the load together, and in this way managed to ride on in safety, though I frequently found myself falling asleep and lurching heavily against the strap. As the moon sank low in the west the ponies had considerable difficulty in following the dim trail and keeping out of the treacherous badger holes with which almost every little prairie knoll is absolutely honeycombed. After the moon was very low we drove through one frightfully rough slough, in which the ponies had to divide their energies between plunging through the water and stiff clay and clambering over the huge boulders, that in the darkness appeared to be half as high as themselves. We then found ourselves upon what in the night appeared to be a broad, level plain, and for some little time they jogged along briskly till just as the moon had dipped her lower horn below the sharply defined horizon a dark object loomed up on the left which I at first took for some portion of the long looked for camp.


As I neared it, however, I became convinced that I was mistaken, but I was still quite at a loss to make out what it really was. It looked a huge shadow of intense blackness rising between us and the setting moon. The light of the level moon rays had left the prairie, but it fell full upon the opposite side of this strange object, casting a narrow, phosphorescent border of ghastly white upon its sharply outlined profile. It took the form of a huge block or pedestal, with a lion of gigantic size crouching upon it. The strange weird effect of the fading moonlight, the utter loneliness of the place, and my own nervous though drowsy condition I have no doubt strengthened and intensified the illusion, but whether it be the ruins of some trader's shanties, or a huge rock, I shall not soon forget the singular impression its sudden appearance upon the prairie made upon me to-night.

A few minutes later and the moon was below the horizon, and though there was an unusually bright aurora I found it impossible to follow the trail any further, and so I made my first night camp out of Battleford without wood or water. Not certain but that we were already a long way off the trail we pitched the tent directly behind the waggon, and as soon as this was done I lighted a candle and examining the ground inside of it found that we were following a fairly-defined trail.

A NIGHT OF UNCERTAINTY.

The night is very cold even inside the tent. I am writing my journal with buckskin gloves on my hands. I must confess that my position is not altogether a very comfortable one. I am on an open prairie which very few, even of the best informed guides, know anything about, and which my guide never saw before. I have at most not more than two weeks' provisions with me. In the morning I shall have to follow on after the Vice-Regal party

with only their waggon tracks as a guide, for this is the first time this route from Battleford to Fort Calgary has ever been taken.



CHAPTER XXII

A DRIVE THROUGH RICH ROMANTIC-LOOKING VALLEYS—PONIES AND WAGGONS STUCK IN A BAD SLOUGH—THE "ALKALI" SCARE UNFOUNDED—KEEN FROST ON THE PLAINS—ACROSS ANOTHER TREELESS PRAIRIE—TENTING IN THE STORM—DRIVING ACROSS THE PLAINS BY MOONLIGHT.

IN CAMP, *en route* from Battleford to Fort Calgary, Sept. 2.—On turning out this morning, I discovered that there had been a very perceptible frost the night before. It was cheerless work sitting down to hard tack and a little cold water that had been accidentally left in my lime juice jar ever since the 25th of August. There was no help for it, however, as we had not a stick of wood nor enough water to make a respectable cup of tea. A drive of about two hours brought us to the spot where the Vice-Regal party had camped the night before, and here we had an excellent breakfast, in which some of the potatoes and onions (with which Mr. Forget, of Battleford, had kindly insisted on furnishing me) played one important part. After breakfast, two fresh ponies took us along at such an admirable rate that we found the noon-day camp of the Governor-General's party in time for dinner. This was in a deep, romantic-looking valley, in which are a chain of alkali lakes, the largest of which is called Child's Lake. It takes its name from a very pretty Indian legend which says that at certain times a number of little children are seen playing with a dog on a little island in the lake. No grown person was ever seen there, the children were always unaccompanied by any one save the dog, and are so small that their heads rise only a little way above the dog's back. There is capital duck shooting here, but this may be said of almost every lake and slough in the North-West. Large hawks and owls are also so very plentiful and bold that the shooting of them can hardly be considered sport. It was a long and tedious job for my slow team, Punch and Sandy, to climb up out of this beautiful alkali valley, but before leaving it Peter loaded enough wood upon the waggon to cook supper and breakfast. This afternoon there had been little of interest to note. As we travel westward it seems as though we were almost continually climbing to higher levels. To-day it seemed as if we were travelling through a succession of immense saucers. In reality, of course, these "saucers" are broad plains, the rotundity of the unbroken surface of the earth making the horizon look considerably higher on every side than the point of vision, so that one is surprised to realize how short the range of vision is on a bit of absolutely level prairie. It is only

when one has climbed to the crest of an isolated mound or ridge that he is able to realize the vast extent of these great plains. From these eminences one can look away across a great expanse of waving dun-coloured grass till, on the clearest afternoon, even the horizon itself is lost. It seems as though sky and earth did not meet, but rather that their approaching edges faded away in the limitless distance.

STUCK IN A SLOUGH.

Having made a rather lengthy stay in our noonday camp at Child's Lake, the last rays of daylight faded from the sky, and still there was nothing to indicate that we were near His Excellency's camp. We drove on in the bright moonlight, determined to keep moving till we reached it, but just as we were talking of changing horses, the pair in harness stopped suddenly in the middle of a very bad slough, and no amount of persuasion or whipping would induce them to haul the waggon out. Punch serenely refused to exert himself after he had made one effort (and not a very energetic one at that), while Sandy, after making one or two nervous snatches at his whiffletree, made an effort to climb over Punch's back. He failed signally in the first attempt, and fell over sidewise, almost on his back, in soft mud and water. He had one foot over the neck-yoke, and was so completely helpless that for a time it looked doubtful if we should get him out alive. Of course there was no choice but to plunge into the cold water and undo the harness as rapidly as possible, and finally we had him on his feet again, breathing very heavily, but none the worse of his accident, excepting a rather ugly-looking cut on one fore-leg. We then took both ponies out of the harness, waded into the water, and unloaded the waggon, carrying each back load about fifty yards up to the dryground, and when all this was done, Peter informed me that he would bring the waggon back with Punch. I was busy at the time, and did not notice what was going on till I saw Punch walking briskly toward me with one end of a rope tied to his tail and the other to the hind axle of the empty waggon. I now determined to camp for the night, as I had no desire to make another attempt to cross the slough till daylight. It is very evident that it is a troublesome place at any time. It has in it a good deal of water, the way through it is obstructed with huge boulders, which one cannot well shun in the night, and it has a bottom of soft, sticky clay. This is a bright, cold, starlight night. The air is frosty, and the slight breeze that is stealing down from over the great plains to the northward has in it a nipping quality that is more suggestive of blazing grates, soft carpets and thick curtains than of a scanty camp fire, a ten-pound tent, and a bed of blankets on the dewy grass. Though this is indeed a lonely little camp, it is by no means a silent one. Up from the marshy meadows away down the little valley, comes the soft, muffled clink of Punch's cow-bell, from the northward come the strange trumpeting of the great sand hill cranes that can be heard for miles over the prairie, close beside us in the slough, not a hundred yards from the tent, I hear the chattering and quacking of the water-hens, ducks and wild geese, while across the ridges from the westward rings the hoarse, sharp snarl and bark of the

cowardly prairie wolf. There is plenty of music, but every note of it intensifies the loneliness of the spot.

IN CAMP, en route from Battleford to Fort Calgary, Sept. 3.—There was a heavy white frost last night and we were a trifle slow in getting out of camp. Leaving Peter to bring Punch and Sandy, I drove with the other pair, and reached the outside of the slough without any difficulty. It was ten o'clock before we arrived at the spot where the Governor-General had camped the night before. Here we found no wood except a piece of an old barrel head, which we burned, and with the fire succeeded in boiling water enough for two small cups of tea.

ALKALI LAKES.

Up to nearly the middle of the day we came upon quite as much alkali as sweet water, the water in the lakes and springs of the former has an opaque, greenish look in the sunlight, while their margins (which are nearly or quite destitute of vegetation save some little brown and crimson grasses or creepers) are lined with masses of foam. On the other hand the sweet water lakes look clear and blue in the sunlight, while their margins are almost invariably clothed with broad-leaved succulent grasses of richest green. Native ponies are not apt to drink enough alkali water to make them any the worse of it, but Canadian horses are sure to set themselves scouring with it, and if they are not allowed absolute rest for a time after this sort of illness shows itself, they are not at all likely to recover. It is sheer nonsense, however, to suppose (as many really do) that these little patches of alkali land in this country constitute a serious drawback. I think from what I have been able to observe of them that these objectionable deposits, besides being very circumscribed as to area are extremely shallow, and that as soon as the land shall have been tilled for a year or two everything like an excess of alkali in it will entirely disappear, and even if it did not there are nearly always sweet water sloughs in the immediate neighbourhood of alkali water, so that upon anything like an extended range of pasture, cattle and horses would always have plenty of sweet water so long as they preferred it, and in the case of horses I believe they usually do. At all events, it is the wildest nonsense to suppose that what little alkali is to be found in the North-West Territory renders any portion of it deserving of the name of "desert." The alkali bugbear, therefore, may be set down as utterly unworthy of serious notice. This afternoon we saw little or no alkali water, though sweet water sloughs and lakelets were plentiful. In fact, for some ten miles in the early part of the afternoon we were driving through a succession of beautiful sweet water valleys, and fine grassy ridges or slopes. Mounting the crest of one of these ridges, and looking off across the country in almost any direction the idea of a great grassy ocean is forcibly impressed upon one's mind. It is like the long heavy swell at sea that is not raised save by days of heavy weather from one quarter; and as compared to these, the prairie waves are as giants to pigmies. These great swells are miles in length, and rise from 150 to 300 feet in height. They break, too, into smaller swells, and just as one sees in a storm at sea, giant waves will here and there rear their towering crests high above

their neighbours. Late in the afternoon we passed through a wide, deep valley with a dark foul-looking creek running through the middle of it. The grass here was dark and brown, and in many spots nothing but moss was to be seen. In the western portion of this same valley were some little ridges of what appeared to be pure sand, but even here wild roses were growing in rich profusion, and there appeared to be plenty of sustenance for rich succulent grasses and wolf willows. In some of these ridges, however, the sand was scooped out in large hollows, as if by the hand of man. Indeed, they merely looked like sand pits that had been partially refilled by the wind. In truth, of course, all this work was done by the wind, but one is often at a loss to understand how the wind could dig out such abrupt little pits, leaving sharp edges of sod as though it had been cut with a spade. Beyond this valley the trail again led through a fine rolling prairie country, absolutely treeless, but otherwise possessing everything necessary for a choice agricultural region. Darkness overtook us in the same kind of country, and as the clouds that had been sending little sprinkles of rain all the afternoon now rolled along overhead in great masses shutting out both moonrise and sunset, and pouring forth volumes of rain, we made camp as rapidly as possible, partially sheltered by an abrupt, dome-shaped hill. By the way we had managed to collect enough of the wood dropped from the waggon ahead of us to cook a supper of ducks, bacon and tea, which was decidedly acceptable after having dined off hard tack, raw bacon, and slough water, the latter being neither very cold nor very pure. To-night, as I close my journal, the storm is howling dismally over the great dark treeless waste outside, while rain is dashing in fitful storm gusts upon my little tent, whose folds are flapping and fluttering like the tattered sails of a tempest-tossed fishing smack, but inside, despite a certain degree of cold and damp, I am tolerably comfortable, though writing in stiff buckskin gloves is not exactly conducive to highly ornamental calligraphy.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S CAMP, *en route* from Battleford to Fort Calgary, Sept. 4.—Despite the storm last night I slept finely. When I turned in, I was afraid that the ponies, driven by the fury of the storm to seek some shelter, might stray off among the hills, but whenever I awoke during the night in the lulls between the more furious bursts of the storm, I could hear the low clinking of Punch's bell, and so I could drop asleep again with a feeling of security I could not otherwise have experienced. When I turned out about daylight this morning, the sky was clear and bright, as though there had been no storm, while the frost which followed the rain had been so sharp that even in walking through the long grass I did not get my boots so much as dampened. Instead of that, however, the broad seams of the soles were thickly covered with the powdery masses of hoar frost that had been dusted off the grass as I walked through it to catch the ponies. As we had no fuel we were obliged to eat a cold breakfast and hurry off. Our first drive was to "Sounding Lake," or, as the literal translation of the Cree name for it would be "Roaring Water." On the way to Sounding Lake (the drive from our night camp was about twelve miles) we passed through fully sixty per

cent. of really excellent agricultural land, while the rest of the country traversed was made up of sandy bluffs and ridges. Among these bluffs, however, I found white and scented poplar growing to a large size, while the luxuriant undergrowth spoke extremely well for the richness of the soil. During the morning we lost the trail and travelled for fully five miles without it. This was not very comforting under the circumstances, but at length while traversing a large marsh we came upon a wretched looking horse that had been abandoned by the Governor-General's party, and a few moments later we struck the trail. In one of the clumps of poplar we had passed we laid in a plentiful supply of wood, so that when we reached the Saturday night camp of our fellow-travellers at Sounding Lake we were able to make an excellent breakfast. In the afternoon we skirted along the flats on the east shore of Sounding Lake to the foot of that body of water, and thence down the valley of a small muddy creek for ten or twelve miles to the crossing. This valley appears to be of rich, productive clay (slightly alkaline), and the creek appeared to be swarming with geese, ewes and ducks of all descriptions. On the way, we passed the spot where the Governor's party had attempted to cross the creek, and failing had left a wrecked waggon. We finally reached the crossing before six o'clock, but as the feed here was exceptionally good we camped for supper, though the north wind sweeping down the valley made our own situation an extremely uncomfortable one. It was nearly seven o'clock when we started for a moonlight drive, and we were soon climbing out of the valley and striking due west. Before nine o'clock, and as the moon was partially obscured, Peter drove into what appeared to be a little strip of dry, baked clay, but the ponies and waggon were no sooner into it than they came to a halt on account of the sticky footing, and five seconds later the waggon had sunk half way to the hubs. Sandy was in the soft clay up to his knees, and Punch was sitting down dog-fashion upon his own tail. In less than ten seconds we had the ponies clear of the waggon, and hitching the whiffletrees at the end of the pole, endeavoured to make them haul the waggon out in that way. It was of no use, however, and it only remained to take them out of the harness and put the lighter team in their places. By this time the waggon had sunk to the hubs all around, and Blanche and Touchwood had to make a very vigorous effort to haul it out, but they did so, and as they were so much faster and more reliable than the heavier team we left them in harness, and drove on over the hills in the moonlight. By ten o'clock the wind was considerably lulled, but the air was intensely keen and frosty. Mile after mile the ponies jogged cheerily along over the great dun-coloured hills and valleys, till the heavy frost crystals on the yellow rustling grass began to sparkle like little diamonds in the bright moonlight, and wrapped in our overcoats and blankets, we still felt the cold, piercing air on our faces and fingers. At last, as we were skirting along the crest of a ridge and opening a deep valley on our right, a row of snowy, cone-like tents rose against the cold light-brown slope on its further side, and in a few moments more the picket-guard of the Governor-General's camp were busy in helping us to unharness the ponies and pitch my little tent. It seemed like getting home

once more, and to-night as I write my journal with frost-benumbed fingers I feel a sense of relief and thankfulness that another crisis in this arduous journey has been safely passed, and that this lonely, tedious wandering along over the great plains upon a dim and uncertain trail is at last over, for the present at least.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE GREE CHIEF RELATES SOME INDIAN LEGENDS—A LECTURE HALL ON THE PRAIRIE—“POUNDMAKER’S” TERRIBLE WINTER AMONG THE BLACKFEET—THE INDIAN QUESTION LOOMING UP—HOW CAN IT BE SETTLED?—SOME SUGGESTIONS—BETTER TEACH THE INDIANS THAN FIGHT OR FEED THEM—CANADA OWES THEM HER WESTERN EMPIRE.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL’S CAMP, *en route* Battleford to Fort Calgary, Sept. 5. —The whole cavalcade was on the move at seven this morning, wrapped in overcoats and blankets, as the air was intensely cold after the heavy frost of last night. This frost was, by the way, very much the heaviest of the season. Wherever water was left in open vessels, even in the tents, there was nearly half an inch of ice upon it this morning, while small quantities were found frozen solid. The day was bright and still, however, and wrappings were thrown off as the sun climbed higher in the sky, till by the time the midday halt was made the air was comparatively warm and pleasant. During the forenoon after we had climbed out of the ravine, some of the grandest stretches of prairie we have yet seen were opened to view. The indescribable idea of vastness portrayed by these great plains, as seen from a high ridge, is something singularly suggestive of the infinite. To-day, of the land we saw, fully ninety-five per cent. was excellent, the other five per cent., though somewhat light, would be classed as fairly productive in almost any section of Ontario. To-night our camp is in a rather picturesque little valley, through which runs the same tortuous creek that we crossed yesterday. Our journey to-day was about thirty-five or forty miles, as nearly as we could make out, and I suppose that might be set down as the average day’s march made by the Governor-General’s outfit ever since leaving Battleford. This morning a herd of buffalo was seen a long way off, but no attempt was made to follow them. Yesterday fresh buffalo tracks were seen, and as nearly as can be made out there were over a dozen in the herd. I believe this is the first year buffaloes have been seen in this part of the country since Sitting Bull and his band located themselves at Wood Mountain near the American boundary. As long as they were there they always fell upon every herd that attempted to cross the border, and the animals they did not kill were always turned back into American territory. Now that that large band of Sioux have gone back to their own country there is good reason to hope that buffalo will come

in sufficient numbers to materially ameliorate the condition of the Canadian plain-hunting Indians, whose state during the past few years has become truly deplorable. The Governor-General's outfit is being guided across the trackless plain between Battleford and Red Deer River by an Indian or half-breed guide, whose real name is John Longmore, but who is better known as Johnny Saskatchewan. He says that he is a pure Indian, but he talks good English, and looks very much like a half-breed. There is also with the outfit another guide who undertakes to direct the party from Red Deer River to Fort Calgary. This is a Cree chief named "Poundmaker," who is one of the great men of his own nation. He received his name, I suppose, for some peculiar ability he displayed in the construction of "pounds" in which to catch and kill buffalo. To-night Mrs. Dawdney, Colonel Herchmer and myself were invited to dine with His Excellency and party, and after dinner Poundmaker was brought in to tell Cree legends or stories, a half-breed in Mr. Dawdney's employ (Antoine Gnille) acting as interpreter. Poundmaker is a particularly fine-looking specimen of his race, being considerably over six feet high, of rather slight build, and singularly erect. He has an intelligent, and almost refined, looking face, a high, prominent forehead, and a nose of the Grecian type, while there is nothing coarse or sensuous about the lower portion of his face. His gestures were strikingly graceful and expressive, his small, delicately-shaped hands often making the meaning of his Cree sentences almost as plain to us as could the English of the interpreter. The scene in the mess-tent while Poundmaker was telling his stories was certainly a strange one. Outside the night winds were piping drearily over the boundless stretches of whispering yellow grass, and keeping the flapping folds of the tent in incessant motion. The candles from their candlesticks of buffalo vertebrae, always disturbed by little errant gusts of wind, shed a flickering, uncertain light upon the solemnly expressive face of the dusky story-teller, while Lord Lorne and his guests, with hats and caps drawn down close upon their heads, and overcoats buttoned up to their chins, made as deeply interested and attentive an audience as ever sat in a well-warmed and brilliantly lighted lecture hall in the heart of a great city. When informed as to what was wanted of him, Poundmaker showed some hesitancy about commencing, and finally started off with the preface that he would not tell them stories of the long ago, which could not be proved by people now living, but would tell them some stories of the country through which they were travelling, which could be corroborated by eye-witnesses who were still living—stories of events of comparatively recent occurrence. First came

"THE STORY OF THE BIG RED DEER."

"Not far from Child's Lake is another and larger body of water called Spirit's Lake, or Ghost Lake. One time, not a great many years ago, there were large bands of Crees, Stobys, and Saulteaux camped at the narrows in this Lake. It was not very long after the ice had taken, and there was not much snow. They were all on the lake, and they saw a pair of red horns standing up through the ice. Two young girls took an axe to go

and cut off the horns to make combs of them, but the old people told them not to touch them. They were not the horns of a red deer, but of some spirit. They would not listen to the warning, however, and (some women are foolish enough to do anything) attempted to cut off the horns. I do not know whether they cut off the horns or not, but just then the spirit, or great animal, moved, and all the ice in the lake broke up, and the two foolish girls and a great many families were drowned, though all had run for shore as soon as they saw that the girls were determined to cut off the horns. Since then the lake has been called Spirit's Lake."

THE BIG OTTER.

"There is a big island in Spirit's Lake, and one time a lot of men were going to hunt for bears on this island. They made a raft of logs, and ten men got on it to go to the island. They were poling the raft along and suddenly they saw the water moving all around the raft, and felt something knocking underneath it. They were frightened, and would have poled back to the main land again, but a big otter put his paws on the raft, and one of the Indians, who had dreamed about it, before, killed the otter with his knife. They towed the monster ashore, and found that he only lacked less than a hand's breadth of being three fathoms long." Poundmaker did not know who got the skin of this famous otter, but he gravely assured us that he thought the Indians must have cut it up and divided it among themselves, for if the Hudson Bay people had got it, they would have shown it as something very wonderful.

THE BIG HORSE.

Poundmaker was not inclined to give any minute details with regard to the "big horse." He said, however, that at this same lake the Crees had once come very near catching a very large iron-grey horse, but he got away by diving down into the lake. They measured his tracks on the shore, and from this it would appear that each of his feet would cover a large dinner-plate.

THE BIG BUFFALO.

"On this side of Carlton, on the south trail to Battleford, there is a spring, and out of that spring there once came a buffalo bull that was killed by the Indians. A chief from Carlton, whom I know, saw this great bull after he was dead, and when he was lying down on his side he was as high as a tall man's chin. All other big bulls that he had ever seen would look like little calves beside him."

THE BIG GRIZZLY BEAR.

"One time 230 Crees were going for a raid upon the Blackfeet, and meeting a great grizzly bear they killed him, but when he was killed they found him so large that they thought he must be a spirit. He measured over seven hands' breadths across the top of the head and he was proportionately large elsewhere. They did not skin him nor cut him up, but set him upon his feet again and put scarlet cloth about his neck and strings of beads on his head."

and gave him tobacco and trinkets, and lit their pipes and blew smoke in his face, and allowed him to smoke their pipes in turn, and spread fine skins and cloths before him, and prayed him to give them good luck. And he did give them good luck, for in that raid they did not lose a horse or a man, though they killed many Blackfeet, and captured more than 300 ponies."

Thus far Poundmaker was quite prepared to vouch for the accuracy of his statements, but now came a legend which he gave for what it was worth. He would tell it as he had heard it from the Blackfeet, who believed it.

THE BLACKFEET STORY.

"Long ago, close under the shadow of the Rocky Mountains, were two camps hunting buffalo. In one they were all women, and in the other they were all men. The women had never seen a man and the men had never seen a woman. They each had buffalo pounds (a Blackfoot woman was the inventor of the buffalo pounds) and they were hunting buffalo. One day the head woman—a wondrously beautiful young squaw—said to two girls that were going out, that they would see two men that day (not dressed as women were), and when they saw them they should bring them back to camp. The girls went out, and just as they were about to face a herd of buffalo they saw the two men. The men told them to go back, but they would not, and even told the men to go back. Then they began talking and laughing, and finally, as any other men would have done, these two men followed the two girls to their camp. They came and saw the beautiful young squaw, who was the head woman, and she told them to go back and bring their chief and the rest of the band and they would marry and live together. The two men did as they were told, but when the chief looked for the head woman he found her shabbily attired, and without ornaments, and he would not believe that she was the head woman and refused her hand. Then the young squaw was very angry, and she told her women to stop for a moment, that no one must select a husband yet. She then retired, and presently came out splendidly arrayed in beautiful robes and wearing costly ornaments. Then the chief wanted her, but she swept past him with scorn, and selecting the youngest, bravest, and handsomest among the men took him for her husband. The other women then took for husbands the rest of the band, except the chief, who was left alone as a punishment for rejecting loveliness in mean attire. He left the band, and wandering off was not heard of afterwards."

His Excellency made several attempts to draw Poundmaker out on the legends of Cree women, but he was singularly disinclined to as much as allude to the women of his own race. Poundmaker's experiences among the Blackfeet would, if carefully drawn out of him, make an interesting book, but his allusions to them to-night were very brief, as though he was averse to telling of what he had done. In his boyish days he often went among the Blackfeet, but it was always to murder their people and steal their ponies. When he grew to be a man he conceived the idea of making peace between the two nations, and then it was that he carried his life in his hand so often that "it made his body shrink" when he thought of it afterward. When the

Crees were about accepting the treaty with Canada he thought it would be better for both the Crees and the Blackfeet, if the latter would make peace with the former and come into the treaty at the same time. The great chief Crowfoot (who I believe had watched over a portion of Poundmaker's boyhood) was very friendly, but even with the protection of that great and powerful chief, a great chief of the Crees was far from being safe among the Blackfeet. He spent one whole winter among the Blackfeet, and though he had but little dread of them when they were sober, he had everything to fear from them when they were drunk, and they had liquor in their lodges nearly all that winter. Many and many a night had he slept in their lodges with his big Remington revolver at full-cock in his right hand, and many a time when he was thus alone, far away even from his friend Crowfoot (Sappomexico), and when the Blackfeet supposed him to be sleeping soundly, had he heard them carrying on a whispered debate as to whether they should kill him or not. And yet during the summer following this winter of terror and suffering, he made trips from the Eagle Hills down into the country of the Blackfeet, till at last his efforts were successful, and peace was established between the two great nations.

TOBACCO IN INDIAN COUNCILS.

When Poundmaker had finished his narrations His Excellency said to him that he hoped that in future, as in the past, his influence would be exerted for the good of his people, that he would continue to be a peacemaker among them, and that the wish of the Great Mother and her Government was that the Indians should be peaceful and prosperous. After this Poundmaker was questioned about the Indian custom of sending tobacco about to call a council. He said that the tobacco was sent around to the chiefs with the message commencing, "Tobacco says this," or "Tobacco says that," and then would follow the calling of the council and the reason therefore. Tobacco meant "bad," that is trouble or mischief. If the Great Chief contemplated an act of violence he sent tobacco to the minor chiefs.

It also leaked out that tobacco was sent out when the Indians were called to meet His Excellency, or "Our Brother-in-law," as the Indians who call themselves the children of the "Great Mother" familiarly style him, and although they have made their complaints about their short rations and lack of farming implements meekly enough under the circumstances, it is by no means certain that all their councils would have passed off pleasantly and peacefully had not His Excellency been provided with a strong escort of Mounted Police.

THE COMING INDIAN QUESTION.

Indeed, I do not think the people of Canada come near understanding the importance which this Indian question is assuming. There is in the North-West a large and well-armed Indian population that is nearly, or quite, without the means of gaining a livelihood. Unless the buffalo should cross the lines in large numbers it is hard to say how many of these people will escape starvation. So far, the Mounted Police have succeeded in gaining their con-

confidence and good will, and so far the best feeling has existed between them and all the Indians. The red men admit that the policemen have done a great deal for them in driving out the whiskey traders who were ruining them, but this state of affairs cannot always exist. White men are coming in both as settlers and cattle ranchers, and starving Indians will be very likely to help themselves to cattle occasionally, if they cannot get other food. This may lead to acts of violence on the part of settlers and "cowboys," and as sure as it does there will be a general uprising among the Indians. I know that such forebodings as these may be laughed at by many who have only seen the poor wretches of Indians who are starving on the borders of civilization; but they must remember that the case is very different here. True, the red men have seldom become very restive under British rule, which they have always been taught to respect; but, as a rule, British colonization has advanced rather slowly into the wilds, and the Indians have had plenty of room to "go west," but now that the more untameable of the tribes have been driven westward year by year till they are, as it were, crowded against the base of the Rocky Mountains, let those who have hitherto placed such overweening confidence in the loyalty of the red men to the British flag beware. From Battleford to the Rocky Mountains and from far below the 49th parallel to the northward is still the Indian's country, so far as power and population are concerned, let the treaties say what they may, and how the mounted police have succeeded in maintaining law and good order here is truly a marvel, which reflects the highest credit on the officers and men, as well as upon the really amiable disposition of the more influential of the Indian chiefs. But it must be remembered that on the other side of the border there was no very serious trouble with the Indians so long as it was merely a matter of intercourse between them and the military, but with the rapid advent of settlers came the difficulties with the red men. Here is one of the widest and richest fields for immigration and prosperous agriculture and stock-raising under the sun, and very soon pioneers will be flocking hither in thousands. To suppose that disputes will not arise between the thrifty settlers and thousands of wild starving Indians is, to any one who has been through this country, too absurd a supposition to be for one moment entertained, and if once the Indians became soured and rebellious it is simply ridiculous to suppose that the mere handful of Mounted Policemen now here (first-class soldiers though they unquestionably are) could do anything to check a general uprising.

I am no alarmist, nor sensationalist and I should be very sorry to write one word that would influence any against settling in the North-West. My object is to avert impending trouble, trouble which I feel confident can be averted by a judicious policy.

WHAT IS NEEDED.

The first thing to do is to provide for the Indians as speedily as possible. In many places they are now working on their reserves with a will, and in some of these places they are nearly or quite self-supporting. They them-

selves know well what they need, and any one who has seen their reserves must see it at a glance. They need more oxen on each reserve to break up the land, and they need more implements to work the land after it has been broken up. Their ponies are, as a rule, too light for ploughing, but they can be made useful in cultivating the land previously ploughed by oxen. Something should be done, too, in the direction of improving the ponies they now have. These little animals are, as a rule, nimble, wiry, and extremely tough, and if a moderate-sized thoroughbred horse (race horse, I mean,) that could be bought at from \$200 to \$400, were placed on each reserve, to be used by the Indians free of charge, the result would be the production, in a very few years, of a race of admirable horses that would be vastly more useful in this country than the very best Canadian or American animals that could be imported. These native ponies are usually compactly built, well-formed, wonderfully strong for their inches, and they will run out winter and summer, and do a very fair share of work without eating anything beyond what they can pick on the prairie. It is very seldom one can discover any unsoundness about one of these North-Western ponies, and I am fully convinced that the cross of a thoroughbred horse upon the mares of this breed would give rise to a race of horses that would make the very best general purpose horse for prairie work that has yet been seen. He would be more useful to the Mounted Police than the most expensive horse that could be brought in, he would make a first-class buffalo runner or general saddle horse and he would make quite as heavy a draught or farm horse as the Indians and settlers require for many years to come. Thus it will be seen that the expenditure of a few thousands of dollars in oxen, farming implements, and thorough bred stallions would in a very few years make many of these poor Indians—who are now only kept alive by the Government rations—comfortable, self-supporting farmers and stock-raisers, and every Indian raised to such a condition would exert a very powerful influence for good upon his less fortunate brethren. The great difficulty to be overcome with the average Indian in these days in his despondency. While it is very hard for the farm instructors to induce the Indians to take any interest in seeding, they are nearly always ready to work in harvesting with interest and alacrity. I know it will be urged that what I propose would involve spending too much upon the Indians, but then, I think it will be much cheaper than fighting or feeding thousands of starving and desperate men a few years hence. And after all, when one looks at the magnificent country we are receiving from them, when one will see a few years hence countless herds of cattle and horses feeding and fattening upon the boundless pampas which before fed their only support, the buffalo, I think he will be a churl indeed who will say that we have paid the Indians too much for this great and glorious North-West.

I do not mean to say that what I have suggested is by any means the only thing needful to be done, to preserve peace and good order in the North-West. The Mounted Police force ought to be greatly strengthened numerically, and there are many other measures necessary to be carried out to insure the con-

tinuance of peace and good order here, but at the same time I have suggested measures, the carrying out of which I consider an immediate and pressing necessity.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A BUFFALO HUNT VIEWED BY HIS EXCELLENCY'S PARTY—FIRST VIEW OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS—COUNCIL WITH THE BLACKFOOT CHIEF CROWFOOT AND HIS BAND—ARRIVAL OF FRESH HORSES AND SUPPLIES—A BLACKFOOT SQUAW WHO SPEAKS ENGLISH—COSTUME OF A BLACKFOOT BELLE—BEAUTIFUL SCENES—DIVINE SERVICE IN CAMP.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S CAMP, *en route* Battleford to Fort Calgary, Sept. 6. —We were off at 6.40 this morning, driving through a fifteen-mile stretch of rolling prairie. The soil appeared to be a trifle lighter than usual, but it was very far from being poor or unproductive. At noon we camped in the valley of a rather dirty-looking half-dried stream, where Captain Percival discovered a bit of ore that in weight and general appearance closely resembled open-grained magnetic iron ore. It was not at all magnetic, however, and as the piece from which it was broken was evidently not in place, very little importance was attached to the discovery. Another of the party found an interesting fossil, however, which will be presented by His Excellency to the Geological Museum at Ottawa. In the afternoon the country traversed was made up of a better grade of soil, and the gigantic stretches of prairie revealed from the summit of one or two great ridges presented a picture of incomprehensible grandeur. Indeed it is impossible to convey either in words or figures an appreciable idea of the vast stretches of fertile land that are lying idle, ready for the plough, in this great treeless wilderness.

To-night we are camped in the valley of a little creek, the water of which appears to possess a peculiar slimy quality. It looks clear enough, and the horses drink it freely, but it feels in the hands like mucilage, or the white of an egg. When the water is boiled the slime rises to the top in the form of a scum, and the residue when cooled is quite drinkable. Here, and in fact many miles of the country through which we have passed to-day, the prairie is covered with buffalo grass. One unacquainted with the peculiar properties of this grass would be very apt to condemn it as absolutely worthless, as in its general appearance it very closely resembles what is commonly known as "wire" grass in Ontario. It has a dried-up yellow look, but it is really full of nutriment. The blade or leaf is cylindrical, and though apparently dry always proves juicy and nutritious when freshly cut or broken. Those who know this grass say that it is just as good in winter as in summer,

and that at any time it is quite as good for horses and cattle as the best cured hay. So far as my observation extends I must admit that though I was strongly prejudiced against it when I first saw it, but I find that my ponies feeding upon the dry benches, where it appears to flourish best, fill themselves just as rapidly as they do in the sloughs, where they have the greenest and freshest of young grasses. To-night is one of the loveliest we have enjoyed in the whole journey. There are no flies, and little or no frost, while the snowy tents and the yellowish dun slopes on either side of the little valley in which we are encamped are bathed in a silvery flood of the brightest moonlight.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S CAMP, RED DEER RIVER, en route Battleford to Fort Calgary, Sept. 7.—After driving through a splendid prairie country from about seven o'clock till about half-past ten, the leading portion of the escort and the ambulance halted very suddenly on the verge of a deep ravine, and as the waggons following arrived one by one it was evident that something very exciting was going on. On reaching the brow of the ravine I soon found that a buffalo hunt was in progress on the opposite side of the ravine. If the whole affair had been, especially arranged for the occasion the distinguished travellers could not have had a more perfect view of a buffalo hunt. The herd of thirteen buffalo bulls were on the farther side of the ravine, where the plateau sloped gently toward us, so that every move could be distinctly seen from the carriages. Johnny Saskatchewan, who was mounted on a speedy brown Kyuse, well trained for buffalo running, was first to dash into the herd, while Poundmaker, on a three-year-old roan pony, and Col. Herchmer on a roan "broncho" cantered along the opposite face of the ravine, but low enough down to be out of sight. Johnny was not more than thirty yards from the herd when he first galloped up over the brow of the bluff and burst upon their view. This enabled him to get around upon the flank of the herd and turn them along the plateau toward the waggons. Soon there was a bright flash right beside his pony's shoulder, and a little puff of smoke curled upward, and a few seconds later came a faint report. Now he is among the buffaloes, and the flashes and puffs of smoke come thick and fast. The dust rises in a great dense cloud, mingling with the curling smoke, and this with the far-off rumble of the trampling herd made up a *tout ensemble* not unlike that of a miniature thunder-storm sweeping across the distant plateau. Already a dark mass lies upon the plain like a great black mound behind the herd. Poundmaker darts up out of the ravine and fires into the herd, and almost at the same instant Col. Herchmer dashes in with his roan broncho. He has no rifle, however, and he falls back while Saskatchewan pulls up, having killed one bull and mortally wounded two. The second buffalo halts close to his dead companion, and paws up the ground in his fury, while the third still gallops along behind the herd for nearly half a mile farther. Colonel Herchmer dismounts, and taking Saskatchewan's rifle gives the halted bull two well-directed shots behind the fore-leg, the second of which brings him down. Louis La Ronde (one of the half-breed guides) having now arrived upon the scene, gives the third bull a shot in the neck, which

brings him to a stand-still, but still he bellows and paws with such fury that tufts of turf and clouds of dust are tossed high above his towering black shoulders. Just at this moment Captain Percival and Mr. Sidney Hall, who have crossed the ravine on foot, reach the spot, and the artist finds material for a marvellously spirited sketch, while the captain rolls the monster bleeding upon the sod with two shots from his "Winchester." Meantime the herd passes along out of view and the buffalo hunt is over. I was particularly struck by the peculiarities of the different horses that crossed the ravine. Col. Hershmer's broncho, though willing and anxious to run into the herd, would not go near a dead or wounded buffalo, while one or two Canadian horses would stop and snort and tremble all over at the sight of the terrific looking monsters. On the other hand I found little Blanche eager to be among them alive or dead. Indeed, when the last bull was threatening to charge, it was with difficulty she could be restrained from galloping right up to him. I also noticed that Saakatchewan's and Poundmaker's "Kynuses" were equally anxious to be among them. And even after the buffalo were lying on the blood-drenched sod, these ponies would go up and snuff about them without the slightest symptom of terror.

RED DEER RIVER.

As soon as the buffalo were killed His Excellency and others who had crossed the ravine rode or walked back to the train, while some of the Indians and half-breeds were left to cut up the animals and bring a portion of the meat and the skin of Col. Hershmer's buffalo, which had been presented to Lord Lorne, to the Red Deer Valley, where we were to camp. The remainder of the drive was across a belt of fine open prairie, and then down a very precipitous hill into the deep and very picturesque valley through which the river flows. The view from the verge of the prairie bluffs on the east side of the valley, is one of rare beauty. Just as the eye has become weary of the "long dun-wolds" of yellow prairie-grass, it was like a glimpse of fairyland to look down into that lovely valley with the limpid river rolling swiftly along over its winding gravelly bed, its margins deeply fringed with grey poplar and choke-cherry trees clad in the brightest and freshest of spring-time verdure and the yellow bottom land, cut into curious shapes with the stream's fantastic curves, were studded over with little trees of richest foliage, so that one might imagine he was entering some lovely park rather than a lonesome dell in an almost untrodden wilderness. This river, which unites with the Bow River lower down on the latter's course toward the South Saakatchewan, is the most limpid stream I have yet seen in the North-West. At this point it is broad, swift, and only about three and a half feet deep at the worst place in the ford. Nearly the whole bottom is gravel, but close to the west bank there is a bit of quicksand that renders the ford somewhat dangerous. After lunch we crossed the ford and encamped for the day on the west bank of the stream. To cross a very swift-flowing and comparatively deep stream like this one, the driver needs to keep his wits well in hand. Let him once begin to watch the roaring torrent dashing against his horses and pouring through

his wheels, he would soon imagine that his whole outfit was going to pieces and ploughing rapidly up stream, but if he once heads his horses down stream, he soon finds that he has made a very serious mistake, and if after that his outfit holds together he may consider himself in excellent luck. The best plan is to abstain from looking at the water altogether, but if one should by chance fix his eyes upon it he should lose no time in turning them at once to the shore he is approaching. Our camp to-night is one of the most picturesque we have yet had. The valley of the Red Deer is rather narrow and has very abrupt walls rising nearly 300 feet high, which are deeply furrowed with ravines and dried-up water courses. These walls are also bordered by irregular rows of curiously shaped clay mounds bearing to them the relation of foot hills to a range of mountains. At one place in the ravine near our camp there is a curious congregation of these mounds bearing a striking resemblance to the ruins of some ancient city. These mounds were almost entirely made up of blue clay utterly destitute of grass or vegetable matter of any kind. Most of them were dome-shaped, varying from five to thirty feet in diameter. Others were pyramidal in form, and others had the appearance of ruined towers with broken ramparts, while there were bits of clay ridges here and there bearing a singular resemblance to broken walls. A rain storm has just broken over the valley from the west as I close my journal.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S CAMP, 12 MILES SOUTH OF RED DEER RIVER en route from Battleford to Fort Calgary, Sept. 8.—This morning the camp was astir, but before a start was made Poundmaker spent some time in exploring the ravines leading up into the western wall of the valley for the purpose of discovering the most favourable outlet. Finally he signalled the party and a start was made. The path up the ravine was a winding and precipitous one, and the rain of last night and the showers which kept falling at intervals this morning had rendered the blue clay so slippery that the ascent was attended with a great deal of difficulty not quite unmingled with an element of danger. In places the path led across the face of steep inclines, where both the footing for the horses and the hold for the waggon wheels in the wet blue clay were extremely uncertain. One of the horses in a baggage waggon became rusty in passing one of these troublesome places, and a second later the waggon, with its load, was lying in the bottom of the ravine beside the trail with its wheels in the air. Fortunately both horses and driver escaped without injury, while the damage to the waggon was not nearly so serious as might have been expected.

Fearing that Blanche and Touchwood might not be able to haul my loaded waggon up this long and precipitous path, Peter desired me to let him use Punch to assist them. Now, I am sorry to say that Punch cannot be relied on to draw well in harness, but like many another Kynse, he will draw admirably by the tail. One of Mr. Dewdney's buckboards was also rather overloaded for the horse-power before it, and accordingly Peter and Antoine united forces. In the first trip up the hill Peter drove my ponies, while Antoine rode Punch, whose tail was fastened to a rope attached to the forward axle of my waggon. On the next trip Antoine drove and Peter enacted

the role of postilion. I have no doubt that many good horsemen will say that this was a piece of cruelty, and I can readily understand that to hitch an excitable or spirited horse by the tail might result in his serious injury, but I believe that any easy tempered pony accustomed to draw in this way may be made to do so without the risk of inflicting on him either suffering or injury. Hitched to a load in this manner Punch will walk off with it as coolly and quietly as the best trained draught horse, while if asked to make anything like a stiff pull in harness he will invariably look around at the driver as though he did not know what was meant. A stranger to the business need not fear to occasionally help himself out of a serious difficulty in this manner.

Six horse teams were made up to take the heaviest waggons up the worst portion of the incline, and as one of these heavy trains was ascending, the travellers who had walked up and were standing upon the verge of the prairie bluff, were startled with a strange chorus of shouts that floated up the ravine, the burden of which was "pound the doctor, pound the doctor!" Nobody supposed that the extremely well-behaved and good-natured red-coated constables had suddenly been seized with the desire to make a murderous assault upon the cultivated and genial Edinburgh divine, and the distinguished M.D. from Quebec would be the last man to incur their displeasure, but still there was a general forward movement upon the bluff to ascertain the real state of affairs. It turned out that the "doctor" was a yellow bay Broncho in one of the six horse teams, and as the "doctor" was often disposed to stop just at the moment when it was most desirable that he should move on, it was deemed advisable to give him the benefit of vigorous applications of three long four-in-hand whips all the way up the ravine.

It took about four hours to haul all the waggons up to the level prairie above the valley of the ravine, and during this time the rain was falling at intervals, though a broad belt of sky along the eastern horizon was clear. Indeed, the scene to the eastward was a charming one. In the foreground lay the deep, narrow valley of the Red Deer, with the crystal river winding along like a great glittering serpent between shadowed margins fringed with the brightest and freshest of foliage. Above this, in the middle distance, rose the broad, gentle slope of yellow prairie grass, over which little curling puffs of silver mist drifted here and there before the fitful breeze. In the background to the north and east, as if the misty curtains of silver and dove colour had been drawn aside, there was revealed a bright opening of clear sky of delicate translucent malachite green, with cloud festoons of drab and French gray overhanging it. By the time the train was ready to move on again the morning showers had changed to a steady pelting rain storm, and I hastened to put on my waterproofs, which in the excitement attendant upon getting my outfit up out of the valley I had wholly neglected. The result of this carelessness was that before I donned my waterproofs my heavy clothing was completely drenched with rain, and as the cold dreary storm swept down upon us I was thoroughly wet and chilled. It took us some three hours to drive to our present camp, the trail passing through a rich, productive, but

treeless prairie country. Our camp to-night is in a very dreary-looking alkali valley, through which runs a sluggish marshy stream that may be set down as half slough and half creek. Everything in my tent is drenched with rain, and this, with my wet clothes, renders my own part of the camp as cheerless as could well be imagined. The condition of the men of the force is even more unenviable. Very few of them have waterproofs of any kind, while the overcoats last furnished them are utterly worthless. They will become wet through with even a slight shower, while they are of such poor material that they are of little use either to resist wear and tear or to keep out the cold. The men are also suffering the inconvenience of being out of everything but tea and buffalo beef, and their blankets and bedding must be in anything but a satisfactory condition. Notwithstanding all this they are as cheery and uncomplaining as ever, singing merrily in their tents, and appearing to enjoy themselves generally, just as though the camp was one of the best on the whole line of march. To-night His Excellency had a fire in his mess tent, and we spent a very pleasant two hours at dinner, but I find it anything but pleasant turning into my cold wet blankets at the close of this dreary day.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S CAMP, BLACKFOOT CROSSING, BOW RIVER, en route Battleford to Fort Calgary, Sept. 9.—This morning the weather was clear and cold, but the horses belonging to the mounted police, used both for His Excellency's transport and by the mounted escort, looked very much the worse of yesterday's cold rain storm. Mr. Dewdney's Canadian and Broncho horses were also badly drawn up and shivering as they were put in harness, but his Kyuses, as well as my own, looked as well as though they had just walked out of a comfortable stable. Throughout to-day we were driving through a fine country, especially adapted to stock-raising, if one could judge from the strong growth of buffalo grass everywhere to be seen, while the numerous long, wide, well-defined coulees or deep valleys which we have passed could not fail to make admirable winter ranges for either cattle or horses. There are plenty of rich bottoms where extensive farming operations could be carried on, while the dry uplands or benches would afford excellent summer pasture for the countless multitudes of cattle and horses that could find a capital living in the valleys and ravines during the winter. Here, too, the buffalo grass grows thick and strong, and in short everything points to the conclusion that the country is particularly well adapted to cattle and horse ranching. Owing probably to the storm of yesterday the horses harnessed to the loaded waggons were to-day dropping out one after another with exhaustion. As fast as one horse gave out another was taken out of the herd of loose horses and put in his place, till finally not a fresh horse was to be had. Four-horse teams were then reduced to three, and even two-horse teams, and finally the force of effective animals became so reduced that some of the scarlet-coated drivers were obliged to stop on the prairie with their loads, some to rest their jaded horses, and others to await the return of stronger horses from among those that had taken their loads into camp. Notwith-

standing the fact that my ponies were fresh and strong all day, I was pretty well back in the train when the ambulances and other conveyances carrying His Excellency and his party reached the verge of the high bluff overlooking Bow River at the Blackfoot Crossing.

It was just 5.45 when I reached the verge of the bluff at the point where the trail leads down into the valley of the river. One of the ambulances had stopped, and Lord Lorne, Col. de Winton, Capt. Bagot, Dr. MacGregor, and Mr. Austin, of the *Times*, had alighted to enjoy for a few moments the lovely prospect. Sending Peter on to camp with the ponies, I joined them. The scene was one of incomparable loveliness and such as defies all description. In the foreground lay the charming valley, its beautiful slopes full of pretty curves and bays and fantastically cut mounds and promontories, showing the brilliant contrast of green and gold in growing and ripening grasses. Along its tortuous channel through the valley, and resplendent in the last glorious beams of the declining sun, Bow River wound like a path of golden light between deep, half-over-arching borders of loveliest green. On the yellow flat beyond its farther shore was an encampment of 2,000 Blackfeet, the smoke-browned cones of their teepees and the thin, dark blue smoke curling up from their scanty camp-fires, making of themselves a charming picture, while the smaller encampment of Sarcees farther up the valley looked as if the nearer picture had been reproduced in deep shadow. In the middle distance beyond the valley, rose the great, broad plain sloping upward to the horizon, and shading from pale dun and yellow into gold and orange, and copper colour. In the back ground against the horizon lay a belt of dark blue that at first sight looked like a low cloud bank. As I was watching the sunset hues tinging its upper edges, Lord Lorne directed my attention to a particular portion of it, where I could see jagged peaks of deep steely blue sharply outlined against the softer but dark-hued cloud banks. It was my first view of the Rocky Mountains.

We were at last in sight of that wondrous barrier, the western limit of the great pampas through which we have been travelling since the 8th of August. As the sun sank lower we could discern the sharp-edged, jagged line rising out of the prairie all along the horizon, and here and there a faint rosy gleam told where the sunlight was resting upon some far-off snow-capped peak towering above its giant companions. The narrow, blue cloud zone was bordered along its upper edge with a low-lying belt of billowy clouds edged with glittering copper bronze. Above this was a space of soft roseate sky half-curtained with thin, golden-edged clouds of softest blue, and over these again were long feathery streaks of vapour, white and gleaming like frosted silver.

Blackfoot medicine was to be seen on a lonely-looking, bold rounded point, standing out from the eastern borders of the valley close beside us. It consisted of an old buffalo skull, into which had been stuck a dry withered branch, partially wrapped in dark cloth, and two or three branches of dried sage attached to it in different places. It was a strange, weird-looking object, and furnished the ever industrious Mr. Sidney Hall with a subject for one of his many sketches. As daylight was fading into grey twilight we made our way

down into the valley where the tents were already pitched and the preparations for the night nearly completed. The tents were close to the river's brink, and over a hundred horses and ponies were enjoying a meal of buffalo grass on the yellow flat eastward of the camp and lying between it and the east wall of the valley. While yet the gray twilight from the west rested upon the herd of horses that thickly dotted the pale dusky lowland, the yellow grass of the bluff was suddenly lit up with a snowy white light, and slowly the full moon reared her broad bright silver disc from out the gleaming whispering grass on the upland to the eastward. The roaring camp fires shed a ruddy light on the scarlet-coated prairie troopers about them and the triple effect of twilight, moonlight, and fire-light was weird and startlingly beautiful. While we were at dinner to-night, Lord Lorne received a message from the great Blackfoot Chief, "Crowfoot," that he and his chiefs would like very much to hold a council with him to-morrow, and as the jaded horses of the outfit are greatly in need of a rest, and as assistance from Calgary is absolutely necessary to anything but very slow progress a messenger was sent on to-night, and the greater part of to-morrow will be spent in a pow-wow with such of the Indians as can manage to cross the deep, swift ford here.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S CAMP, BOW RIVER, twelve miles west of Blackfoot Crossing, en route Battleford to Fort Calgary, Sep. 10.—There was great activity in the Blackfoot Camp early this morning, and by nine o'clock large numbers of them were mounted on their ponies and making their way down to the ford, which was nearly, or quite, two miles below the point at which we were encamped. Saddling little Blanche, I rode down alone to witness the crossing of the ford.

Bow River at this point is both deep and swift, and the banks, though not high, are very precipitate. As I reached the ford the Indian had already collected in large numbers in a little clearing on the opposite bank, and, lit up by the morning sunlight, the picture presented was a strange and picturesque one. Almost every conceivable bright colour was represented in that gaudily-attired group, the copper skins of the Indians themselves, the scarlet, blue, purple, green, orange, crimson, white, and brilliantly striped blankets, the glistening brass ornaments, the buff, brown, and white moose, buffalo, and caribou skins tanned and worked into tunics, the brightly-dyed feathers and rich furs, all blended with a strange and luxuriant mingling of colours more suggestive of real barbaric splendor than anything I have yet seen. The ponies, too, represented every conceivable colour, and nearly all had enough of the pinto in their composition to insure the most startling effects in the way of white markings. They were black, brown, chestnut, bay, buckskin, cream, roan, grey, white, and piebald, and nearly every one was strongly marked with a blazed face and white stockings, or irregular spots of white or black, indicative of a piebald ancestry. The sunlight breaking through a rift in the foliage on the east bank threw across the swift limpid river a glittering band of golden light, and into this brilliant zone the long-tailed, shaggy-maned ponies, each carrying one, two, or three gaudily-dressed riders, walked in single file. The ford was so deep that often only the ponies

heads and the bodies of their riders were visible, but still the gallant little fellows setting their unshod feet firmly upon the gravelly bottom stoutly stemmed the current and soon the vanguard had reached the eastern shore. For three quarters of an hour this strange wild-looking procession was crossing the ford looking in that gleaming watery path like a narrow strip of fantastic embroidery worked into a broad belt of burnished gold.

Almost every Blackfoot as he landed greeted me with a grunt of welcome and shook hands with extraordinary cordiality, and I soon found myself surrounded by fifty or sixty of these dark-skinned savages. I was singularly impressed with the conduct of little Blanche on this occasion. Turn her loose amongst a herd of police horses and she will lay back her ears and scowl or snap at every one of them that comes near her, but among these ponies of her own race her conduct was most amiable. She snuffed about the head of every pony that came near her, and seemed to enjoy their society even more than I did that of their good-natured masters. When the crossing of the ford had been completed the whole party rode up towards camp, Blanche cantering in and out among them as though she and I had been members of the fraternity. Not knowing a word of Blackfoot, I talked English to my dusky companions as volubly as though they understood every word I said. Presently I found myself between two very gorgeously dressed young squaws, each had a pony of her own and I thought this a remarkably wise provision, as otherwise the aggregation of brass ornaments they wore would have been too heavy a load for any ordinary Kyuse to have brought safely across the ford. Here I began to talk English as usual, and the reader can imagine my surprise at finding myself answered in perfectly good English spoken in a soft lady-like tone by the squaw on my right. Her face was painted in bright lemon chrome with fine scarlet lines along the eyelashes. She had good features and exceptionally good teeth and she showed the latter very frequently as she was evidently greatly amused at the surprise I exhibited at her knowledge of English. Had it not been that she was so hideously painted, I have no doubt she would have been decidedly good-looking. My *tit-tit* was of very short duration, as a strapping fellow, one of the minor chiefs (her husband) rode up between us, and with a hearty grunt of welcome and a most amiable smile shook hands with me with such extreme cordiality that he almost forced the blood from under my finger nails. He was evidently extremely proud of his favourite wife's accomplishments, and appeared more than pleased, her having thus attracted my attention. I afterwards learned a little of the history of this young lady. She was the daughter of a white trapper, with whom she had lived till she was seventeen years old. She then married a white trader, who greatly ill-used her, and at the expiry of her first year of married life fled in a hurry, joined a band of Blackfeet, and married a young chief who had already two wives. Her mother was a Piegan squaw.

THE BLACKFOOT COUNCIL.

The spot chosen for the Council was upon a broad flat, a little to the south of our camp, the site of the blue and white striped tents in the Government

General's outfit had been converted into an awning and faced southward for the occasion. Beneath the awning were His Excellency, Colonel De Winton, Mr. Dewdney, Dr. McGregor, and Mr. Austin; Captain Chater and Captain Percival occupying positions at either end of the row. The Indians advanced in two lines about two hundred feet apart. They were all mounted on their ponies and armed with their Winchester rifles. They came on at full gallop, each line charging at and firing over the heads of those in the other line with wonderful rapidity. This irregular sort of sham battle was the most brilliant display to which they have yet treated us, and one which His Excellency appeared to enjoy very much. When the battle was over the ponies were all hobbled or picketed on different parts of the plain, and the Indians seated themselves in a large semi-circle south of the awning, in a line three or four deep. Three-quarters of the circle were occupied by the Blackfeet, while that which was to the westward, and the right of the Governor-General, was taken up by the Sarcees. From either end of the awning to the ends of the semi-circle or horseshoe extended a line of dismounted constables, under command of Colonel Herchmer, who stood at the head of the eastern file; Sergeant-Major Lake occupying a similar position on the west. As has been the case on all similar occasions, the men presented an admirable and soldierly appearance. The uniforms and accoutrements were spotlessly clean, and every buckle, chain and spur glistened in the sun as though officers and men had just marched out of barracks instead of coming out of camp immediately after a long and very arduous march. Directly in front of the Governor-General and facing him sat Crowfoot, Old Sun, and one or two other prominent chiefs of the Blackfeet. On the east side of the enclosure were a number of warriors and headmen, who amused the party prior to the opening of the business of the council with a number of fantastic dances. Altogether this display far surpassed any that had been seen on the journey. The day was particularly favourable, the bright sunshine lighting up the brilliant uniforms of the police and the gay-coloured costumes of the savages with particularly good effect. After the dancing was over, Crowfoot introduced his wife, a rather comely and matronly-looking squaw, who shook hands with His Excellency and the rest of the party with gushing cordiality, and capped the climax by kissing Mr. Dewdney, an honour which the blushing Indian Commissioner evidently did not covet. Crowfoot made a rather effective speech, but the gist of it was very much like that of the other Indian Chiefs we have heard. He made a telling passage concerning the shortness of his rations by flourishing a large granite ware teacup and declaring that it could not possibly hold one pound, enough flour to support an Indian twenty-four hours. He also complained that a pound of meat when containing a large piece of bone was an insufficient supply for a like period of time. It is urged on the other hand, however, that when an Indian gets a piece of bone in his allowance he invariably extracts the marrow to use for hair oil instead of making soup of the bone or devoting it to other useful purposes. Crowfoot also exhibited a one dollar bill, and remarked that such pieces of paper in former days sometimes passed for five dollars, and he did not understand the remarkable deprecia-

tion in their value. His Excellency explained to him, however, that the large issue of one dollar bills had been expressly made to protect the interests of the Indians, and that hereafter they could understand that a piece of paper of that description represented one dollar and no more. At the close of the Council there were several rather grotesque displays illustrative of Indian warfare and hunting. The presents were distributed and the Council ended. While His Excellency and party were getting ready for the march, there were a number of pony races, which excited considerable interest, though many of the band, especially the female portion of it, remained at the camp to witness his departure.

Selecting a young squaw, the wife of a chief, as an example, I took careful notes of her attire, that lady readers may be informed as to the costume of a Blackfoot belle. The upper portion of her face, including forehead, eyes, and cheeks, was painted in bright chrome yellow, the lower portion of her face was scarlet; she wore a scarlet blanket thrown loosely over her shoulders, and under this was a long loose blouse made out of a dark navy blue blanket, and trimmed with pipings of scarlet and white. This blouse was fastened at the waist with a leather belt fully eight inches broad, and literally covered with large bosses of polished brass. On her neck was a string of brass beads as large as cherries. One of her bracelets consisted of a coil of heavy brass wire that would weigh not less than a pound and a half, while the other, which was nearly the same weight, was made of large brass beads; several of her fingers were nearly covered with coils of brass wire and beads. It was late in the afternoon when we left Blackfoot Crossing. We drove through a beautiful country all made up of rich land with the exception of one narrow sand ridge, and reached our present camp after dark, having enjoyed another splendid view of the Rocky Mountains at sun-set.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S CAMP, TWENTY MILES EAST OF FORT CALGARY, en route Battleford to Fort Calgary, Sept. 11th.—This has been a most enjoyable day so far as I have been concerned, but though the journey has been rather shorter than usual, it has told terribly against the jaded and worn-out horses in the outfit. My Kyuses have, with the aid of a little barley, been putting on flesh ever since they left Battleford, and are in all respects better ponies than they were in the earlier stages of the journey. On the other hand, with one solitary exception, the other horses look travel-worn, sore, and gaunt. The exception I allude to is a large brown gelding of Clear Grit parentage belonging to Mr. Dewdney. This remarkable horse has been working against two others in a very heavily-laden, hard-running buckboard; he has not missed a single hitch since he joined the party at Shoal Lake, and even to-day whenever his jaded partner was touched with the whip he would dance and pull like a well-fed horse fresh from the stable and out for a half hour's exercise. The country through which we have travelled to-day has continued to improve so far as the character of the soil is concerned, but the trail has been an uncommonly heavy one, owing to the unusual number of badger holes. We only made one hitch, but that was an unusually long one and by the time we reached the camp (about two p. m.) the train was strung out

several miles. We are in full view of the Rocky Mountains, the bright sunlight bringing out their snow-capped peaks with wonderful distinctness. To see that mighty range rising like a jagged wall of burnished silver out of the dun-coloured prairie is a sight worth years of hardship. To attempt to describe it would be like trying to define the infinite. About four o'clock this afternoon the rattle of a waggon was heard on the trail and a few seconds later Col. Irvine, the Commissioner, and Captain Cotton, the adjutant of the Mounted Police Force, came galloping over the hills a hundred yards from camp. They brought with them over thirty fresh horses, a quantity of oats, and all other needed supplies. It is needless to say that there was not one in the party who was not well nigh overjoyed to see such complete relief reach us at so opportune a moment. Colonel Herchmer had handled the whole force at his disposal with the most marked ability and judgment ever since His Excellency's party had placed themselves under his care, at the end of the track, on the eighth of last month. He had laboured with untiring zeal and complete success to make the journey a pleasant one, but owing to the miscalculation of the distance and the nature of the route by Saskatchewan, who acted as guide from Battleford to Red Deer River, the journey occupied very much more time than was expected. The result was that both supplies and horses were insufficient for the journey, though fortunately no serious inconvenience had yet been experienced up to the moment of Col. Irvine's arrival.

This afternoon a short service was held by Dr. MacGregor in the open air, in accordance with the custom that has prevailed in His Excellency's party ever since we started.

CHAPTER XXV.

ARRIVAL OF THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL AT FORT CALGARY.—SENATOR COCHRANE'S RANCH.—HOW A GREAT STOCK FARM IS FILLED.—COST OF MONTANA CATTLE.—CHINOOK WINDS.—A REST AT THE FORT.—THE JOURNEY ACROSS THE PLAINS RESUMED.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S CAMP, FORT CALGARY, Sept. 12.—This morning we were early on the move, Colonel Irvine having decided that with the aid of the fresh horses Calgary could be reached in one hitch. We rattled along at a lively pace, the fresh horses hauling the ambulances and some of the loaded waggons in grand style. Blanche and Touchwood kept up to them without difficulty, and Mr. Dewdney's buckboards were also well to the fore, but the waggons drawn by horses brought through by Battleford made but sorry progress. Five or six miles east of the Fort I overtook Captain Percival and Mr. Sidney Hall walking beside their buckboard and doing their best

to keep them thoroughly "played out" Broncho on the move. Luckily I had Punch tied by the halter to the back of my waggon, and having harnessed him to the buckboard in the place of the tired Broncho, they were enabled to jog along for the remainder of the distance in company with the rest of the party. Late in the forenoon we reached the verge of the high prairie bluff overlooking Fort Calgary and of all the charming pictures we have seen on the journey, this was generally admitted to be by far the most beautiful. The valley of the river at this point is much wider and the stream more tortuous than at Blackfoot crossing; indeed, the valley of Bow River, and that of one of its chief tributaries, the Elbow, unite in a broad, low plain, and this great rich valley, studded with cottonwood, wild cherries, and grey willows, looked like some fancifully arranged plantation. A slight frost had nipped the leaves of many of the trees, so that the lovely autumnal shades of lemon and gold and orange and crimson contrasted richly with the fresh summer verdure of the untouched trees. But, after all, it was not the foreground of the picture that constituted its most charming feature, for in the background rose the giant peaks of the Rocky Mountains in indescribable splendour. Above and beyond them lay a sky of deep soft blue, overhung with cloud festoons of delicate grey and light dove-colour, from which some little feathery fragments had broken off and drifted down in dainty cloud islets into the blue zone below. Against this rich-coloured background, and in sharp relief rose the wild and rugged outlines of the mountain range, with its snow-clad peaks glittering in dazzling white as the sun lit up their gleaming slopes. Here were ruined towers and battlements and pyramids cut and polished in alabaster, as if some great city, realizing the grand dreams of the Apocalypse, had been hurled in ruins upon the plains. Below, as if to veil their glories from the vulgar gaze, hung a dark blue vapour, like a thin curtain of silken gauze concealing the foot of the hills and the rugged mountain slopes, as yet uncovered with the snowy mantle. On the eastern face of one of these great white, nameless peaks of pyramidal form hung a gigantic cross of dark steel-grey, looking grim and cold in the brightest sunshine. This peak must have been full sixty miles away, and still the cross at its summit looked as large, regular, and well-defined as would a twelve-foot cross of heavy timbers painted in dark steel-grey, and hung against a white background two hundred yards away. To the north of this rose another and still higher pyramid of spotless white, and on learning that it had not yet been named, Dr. MacGregor, with the consent of His Excellency, named it "Lorne Mountain."

Fort Calgary was once one of the regular posts of the Mounted Police, but it has since been reduced to an outpost, and only a non-commissioned officer and two constables reside within the stockade. The Hudson Bay Company Bow River Post is located here, and the American traders, J. G. Baker & Co., do an extensive trade here with the ranchers and Indians. The ford being both deep and swift, it was deemed advisable to ferry the passengers and baggage in the boats which had been built for the use of His Excellency when it was intended that he and his party should travel by water from here to the elbow

of the South Saskatchewan, instead of returning by the way of Helena as they have since determined to do.

The camp here is nearly or quite a mile and a half from the ford, and in a beautiful plateau on the Elbow River. It commands a charming view of the Rocky Mountains, and in all respects the most beautiful that we have had on the whole journey from Winnipeg. The rows of tents and waggons are laid out so as to enclose a parallelogram with mathematical precision, and the little raised plateau, the whole of which is thus enclosed, is almost as smooth and level as a billiard table. In this whole region, so far as I have been able to observe, the soil consists of a very friable black loam, extremely productive, and deep enough to be practically inexhaustible. We are now about 1,000 miles west of Winnipeg, and after having carefully noted the character of every mile of country through which we have travelled, I can only say that I have not seen an acre of land anywhere along the route that is not likely sooner or later, to be of value either for agricultural or grazing purposes. The lack of fuel is for the present a serious drawback, but unless I am much mistaken coal will be found in such quantities and so distributed throughout the country as to make fuel easily obtainable in any part of the North-West, while the construction of railways will ere long make the cost of building material very much less than it is at present.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S CAMP, FORT CALGARY, Sept. 13.—To-day the Governor-General and party remained most of the time in camp resting after their long journey. A special messenger was despatched this morning with letters for Canada and England, but contrary to expectation, His Excellency has as yet received no mail, though one is hourly expected.

To-day John Glenn, one of the pioneers of this region, drove into camp with a lot of samples of the grain and root crops grown on his rancho at Fish Creek, some seven or eight miles south of this fort, and on the road to Fort MacLeod. He underwent a rigid cross-examination at the hands of His Excellency, Dr. MacGregor, and others, and the facts elicited may be summed up as follows:—Mr. Glenn, who is a native of Curragh Fen, near Galway, Ireland, has been on this side of the Atlantic for many years, having spent some time in Texas, Utah, Montana, etc. He has travelled from the Rio Grande to Peace River, but is very sure he likes this region better than any he has yet seen. He says that the greatest trouble here is the want of labourers. Last year he had to go on seeding to the 10th of June, which was, of course, much too late. If he could have had his spring's work done promptly last season he is certain he would have had his crops all in before the 24th of August, on which day there came a great surprise in the shape of a heavy snow storm. He had been located on Fish Creek since 1875, and has now 40 acres under cultivation, and 150 acres fenced. As a proof that he considers the country eminently suitable for agriculture he stated that he had \$1,200 invested in agricultural implements instead of live stock. He has one neighbour, a French Canadian, who began ranching this year and is doing well. He thought the route we had taken from Battleford was not a favourable one for seeing the best part of the country. Had we gone farther north

we would have seen land as good as that about Bow River. Like other settlers on the prairie Mr. Glenn has suffered considerable inconvenience from the want of timber. Regarding the productiveness of the land in this region, I can safely say that Mr. Glenn's evidence and the samples of produce he brought furnished the most satisfactory proof of its extraordinary richness. He had raised fifty-seven bushels of oats to the acre, and his barley has turned out as high as seventy bushels to the acre. His wheat, which was grown from bad seed, did not turn out as well as usual this year, but still the sample he showed us was rather better than the average met with in Ontario. The samples of root crops and garden produce which he brought in were of the finest quality, some of the cabbages being equal if not superior to any I have ever seen exhibited in Ontario. Out of the sheaf of barley brought in by Mr. Glenn, three heads were selected at random. The first turned out 74, the second 59, and the third 76 well filled, fully developed kernels. His turnips, which were planted in the first of June, furnished fine samples weighing from 12 to 16 lbs. Mr. Glenn says that his crops are not at all exceptional, and that other ranchmen are doing quite as well as he is. He assured us that a great deal of the talk about summer frosts is due to the representations of cattle ranchers who desire to monopolize the whole region for themselves. He complained that as a rule the Bow River country did not get fair play in being represented to the public. "Only last week," said he, "Mr. Dawson, the Government surveyor, who, I am told, is talking against this country as an agricultural region, drove past my place and never so much as halted for a moment to look at or enquire about my crops; and yet I suppose he will go down and say this country is not fit for settlement." Mr. Glenn said that horses did well here in the winter, the frozen buffalo grass being as nutritious and as good for them as well cured hay. He said that he had seen a steer killed last March that had picked his own living all winter without having been fed a mouthful, and yet he proved the fattest beef he had ever seen killed.

LETTERS FROM HOME.

To-night His Excellency received a well-filled mail bag of letters and newspapers, and a telegram announcing the death of Senator Brouse. At dinner he spoke in the highest terms of the deceased Senator, stating that his loss to the Senate would be irreparable. Among the English papers was the *Gazette* announcing Capt. Chater's promotion, and accordingly "Major Chater" was heartily congratulated by all present. To-day I met Mr. Geo. Scott, an Ontario farmer, late of the Township of Nissour, near London, Ont., on his way to the Cochrane ranche, fifteen miles above here. He is delighted with the country.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S CAMP, FORT CALGARY, Sept. 14.—This morning Mr. Barter and Major Bains, from the Cochrane Ranche, called at the Camp and were subjected to a somewhat lengthy examination as to the character and nature of the enterprise in which they are engaged, and as to the capabilities of the Bow River country generally. Regarding the former they may be

supposed to know a good deal of course, but they were evidently inclined, being ranchers, to belittle the agricultural resources of the country. I do not mean to say that their reports were altogether unreliable in this direction, but when I have the unquestionable proof offered by John Glenn in the shape of samples of produce, to weigh in the balance against their simple "say so," I must confess a very strong disposition to give the ocular proof the preference.

The facts that are furnished about the Cochrane Rancho were substantially as follows:—The country under the influence of the warm west winds blowing from off the tidal current across the mountains, and keeping the snow melted off the prairies for nearly the whole winter, is about twelve miles wide in the vicinity of Fort Calgary, but further south it becomes much wider. These warm west winds are called "Chinook" winds, after an Indian tribe occupying a portion of the western slope of the Rocky Mountains.

The Cochrane Rancho consists of 100,000 acres, all under the influence of Chinook winds. Within this area a foot depth of snow has never been known to lie more than three days at a time, for the first west wind was sure to thaw it with wonderful rapidity. On the rancho they have now about 6,000 head of cattle, including 55 good bulls. It is intended, however, by the end of October, to bring the herd up to 7,200. The cost of Montana and Oregon cattle (the kinds brought in here) is about \$23 per head, as the transport from Montana is rather slow and expensive, the average day's march being only about 10 miles. There are three kinds of bulls employed on this rancho, Shorthorns, the Herefords and Polled Angus. There is plenty of timber easily available, but as yet nothing worth mentioning has been done in the way of building on account of the difficulty of securing labourers and mechanics. There is plenty of room for farm labourers in this country. Good handy "cow boys" receive \$40 per month and board, and half-breeds from \$35 to \$40 with board of course. City-bred men are of little use here until they have learned to rough it and "and got into the ways of the country," but for farmers' sons and energetic farm labourers the opening is an excellent one. The sort of life they lead here is very different from that of farm labourers in Ontario. A great deal is done here on horse-back. It is unwise to go near a herd of Montana or Oregon cattle on foot, and those who have had most experience with them will always be the last to venture in doing so, as the danger of being trampled to death merely to satisfy the curiosity of the cattle is altogether too great. There are also in the Cochrane rancho 260 Broncho mares, which it is intended to breed to stallions of various breeds. They also intend to put large numbers of sheep in the range. At this point in the conversation Dr. MacGregor asked one of the gentlemen what he thought of the agricultural capabilities of the Bow River country. His reply was particularly unique in its character. He said, "There is plenty of excellent agricultural land"—his companion here gave him a very peculiar glance—and he finished the sentence by adding, "five or six hundred miles from here." In the afternoon His Excellency and some of the party drove up to see the Cochrane Rancho, and witness the operation of lassoing cattle,

and to-night preparations are being made for a start to Fort McLeod. Commissioner Irvine having kindly offered me transport southward, I shall leave my Kyuses and Peter here till I return on the way to Edmonton.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S CAMP, HIGH RIVER, en route from Fort Calgary to Fort McLeod, Sept. 15.—There has been but little to note in to-day's travel. All day we have been following a well-beaten trail running through what I should take to be the very choicest of moderately undulating prairie land. The badgers usually dig their holes to a depth of several feet below the surface I believe, but wherever I have seen a badger hole to-day, even on the highest-looking uplands, I have seen nothing but the richest black loam thrown out of the excavation. The rich and abundant growth of buffalo grass also offers the most satisfactory proof of the extraordinary wealth of these great stretches of prairie. As a stock country I do not see how the region through which we have been travelling could be surpassed, for besides possessing a rich soil under the influence of the warm Chinook winds that blow over the Rocky Mountains (whose dark rugged slopes, shrouded in their blue haze, and whose snow-clad peaks, glittering in an unclouded sunlight loom up on our right like a wall of steel with turrets and pinnacles of burnished silver and gold) it is abundantly supplied with limpid mountain streams of the purest water. In the forty miles we have traversed to-day we crossed the following never-failing swift-running streams of cold, sweet water, fresh from the snows of the "Rockies":—Elbow River, Fish Creek, Pine Creek, Sheep Creek, and High River. All these are streams of considerable magnitude, and they and their small tributaries wind about among the valleys so as to water a very great extent of country. There are two large ranches being established on High River, and near Fort Calgary we passed Captain Denny's Rancho, which fronts on Bow River. I am inclined to think there will yet be trouble in settling the respective claims of many of these ranchers, but I shall deal with this subject more fully when I shall have had the opportunity of learning a little more about it.

To-night from our camp on the south bank of High River nearly every one was struck with the marvellously beautiful sunset. The mountains are about thirty miles from camp in a straight line, but they do not look more than two miles away. During the afternoon there had been several rain storms and snow squalls careering among the peaks, and even the trail was threatened once or twice with rain, but just before sunset the sky cleared in the western horizon, and the warm sunlight peering through the cloudy passes and dark, sullen ravines made them send up curious little puffs of vapour, that, curling over some of the sharp conical peaks, were singularly suggestive of a smoking volcano, while others floating higher in the clear sky and catching the slanting sunbeams, looked like little islands of fire floating in a translucent sea of amber and lemon gold. As the sun sank lower the heavy curtain of rain cloud that still hung low over this bright horizon caught the declining sunlight; first its festooned edges were fringed with gold, but swiftly its great curling folds changed from leaden blue to dun and buff and from that to rich gold and bronze, and as the sun sank still lower they grew brighter and

brighter till away up almost to the zenith the great cloud curtain was all aflame with orange and crimson. The sun was now hidden behind a great pyramidal mountain, but a misty plume hanging from its peak and trailing down its northern slope caught the sunset splendour and looked like a fiery volume of lava pouring down its dark shadowy side. Still, though the snow peaks were edged with fire, all below was in deep shadow and shrouded in a dark thin vapour of purple and blue, while the inky storm clouds in the east drifted about in threatening billowy masses, with here and there a rift revealing a dark cold sky of intense steely blue.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S CAMP, WILLOW CREEK, en route Fort Calgary to Fort McLeod, Sept. 16.—The country through which the trail has led to-day was so like that seen yesterday that it is quite unnecessary to describe it. The soil is extremely rich and the country is certainly admirably adapted either to agriculture or stock-raising. The noon camp was at Mosquito Creek, and to-night an excellent camp-ground was selected on the east bank of Willow Creek. Both of these streams are pure and limpid as the finest trout streams or spring creeks in Ontario. Several other fine sweet water sloughs, coolies, and small mountain streams were passed on the way. Several of the horses succumbed on the march to-day, but all were finally brought into camp, and will probably recover if carefully handled.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ARRIVAL AT FORT MCLEOD—A VILLAGE WITH NO COMPEER—A TOWN IN THE FAR WEST—ITS INHABITANTS—ITS STREETS—ITS ACCOMMODATIONS.

FORT MCLEOD, Sept. 17.—His Excellency has now been fifty-eight days en route from Toronto and forty-one days from Winnipeg. Since leaving Winnipeg he has travelled probably over 1,100 miles. The drive to-day was a short one of only about twenty-eight or thirty miles. The only halt made was at the cut bank on Willow Creek, less than ten miles from this Fort. Again the trail led through a very fine rolling prairie on the western slope of the Porcupine Hills, which is a rather high range of prairie foot hills leading up to the Rocky Mountains. For nearly the whole way the trail was in sight of Willow Creek, which takes an almost southerly course till within a short distance of Fort McLeod, where it joins the valley of Old Man's River (another beautiful mountain stream of pure limpid water), the smaller stream merging with the greater a short distance below the Fort. The ford at Old Man's River is a deep one, but it was passed without any mishaps. The journey to-day was made at a smart pace, sixteen fresh horses having been

sent out yesterday by Colonel Irvine, to meet the party at the Willow Creek Camp last night. From the cut bank His Excellency's ambulance was escorted by a guard of honour, the officers and constables under Colonel Herchmer making a remarkably smart and soldierly display despite the fact that they were near the end of a very long and arduous march. When the train was within a few miles of the Fort it was met by Colonel Irvine, Captain Cotton, and one or two other officers, and later by a large escort of Indians and settlers on horseback. The *entrée* into the village was a decidedly imposing sight, which was witnessed by a large concourse of settlers and Indians. A picket line of red-coated troopers, well mounted, marked the route from the edge of the ford to the entrance of the Fort, beside which were files of dismounted constables, all looking remarkably well, and wearing that thoroughly soldierly look that distinguishes the well-trained regular from the volunteer.

Fort McLeod is so thoroughly unlike any village, large or small, in Ontario or Quebec, or any to be found in the Northern or Eastern States, that it is not easy to convey to the reader anything like a satisfactory picture of it. It is built upon a low-lying, dusty, gravelly flat completely surrounded by water except when Old Man's River is exceptionally low. The main portion of the river passes just north of the village, but a shallow, gravelly loop from it swoops around in a semicircle to the south. The pasture in the vicinity of the village is extremely short, having been eaten off by the settlers' horses and the ponies belonging to numerous bands of Indians that are camping here from time to time. Before having anything to say about the Fort proper, which is enclosed in a strong stockade just west of the village, I shall attempt to describe the village itself as I found it this afternoon and evening. It is nearly all built on one street, which is not a very long nor very straight one, though the rows of houses are pretty nearly in line with each other. The buildings are all one storey high with low and nearly flat roofs. They are mostly built of poles or logs and mud, but instead of being detached cabins as is usually the case in these primitive hamlets they are in blocks or rows. One building joins another just as do the large rows of houses in the most crowded of cities. There are no attempts at front yards, every door opening on the street. Some of the buildings are so constructed as to form two sides of a corral, the other two sides being a strong palisade of heavy pickets driven firmly into the ground, and so close together that nothing bigger than a squirrel could work its way through them. Most of the buildings and palisades are whitewashed outside, but the interiors have a smoky, dingy look, as though they had been subjected to a smoky, smothering atmosphere during the greater part of their existence. Some of the darkest and smokiest-looking apartments that I saw in these rows (where "private residences" and "business blocks" are so mingled that it is difficult to tell which is which), were occupied by half-breed families, but others but a trifle less offensive in appearance are groceries and stores, several of which have billiard tables, and most of them have cigars and "soft drinks" for sale at fancy prices. At one of these establishments, a restaurant, I dined this evening.

and as it is fairly characteristic of the shops at McLeod, a description of it may answer for the lot. It is a low, whitewashed, log building like the rest. Over the door is painted in small black letters—"Camoose House."

"Camoose" is the Indian name of the white proprietor of the place. I do not know his real name, but he was formerly a trader among the Indians, and they named him "Camoose," which is the Blackfoot noun for thief. On the west side of the door are two very rudely drawn pictures, one representing a lank-looking individual with the inscription beneath, "Before dinner," and the other a portly man of aldermanic rotundity, and underneath it the words, "After dinner." On the opposite side of the door was the following sign, surmounted by a "bull-dog" pistol, with the words "settle up" issuing from its cavernous muzzle:—

CAMOOSE & STEELE.

RESTAURANT.

HORSES FED HAY 50c.

DO. ALL NIGHT 75c.

MEALS 50c.

JAWBONE LAY OUT!

TERMS STRICTLY CASH!!

Mr. Camoose had intended that the next to last sentence on his sign should read "Jawbone played out," but some evil-disposed person had erased the letters so as to make it read "Jawbone lay out." The front room was a large apartment, having a dingy-looking billiard table in the centre and a few rough benches scattered about the floor, while next to the walls, which were of roughly-hewn logs rudely plastered, were several small rolls of blankets belonging to the lodgers of the establishment. The roof was concealed by loose festoons of factory cotton, smoke-browned and dirty. Dinner (or supper) was not ready when I entered the place, and the door into the inner or back room where it was being put on the table was kept carefully locked. The front room was full of "ranchers" (every farm, claim, or cattle range here is called a ranche and farmers and stock-breeders are called ranchers) "bull-whackers," "mule skimmers" and "traders." As everybody here rides on horse-back, nearly all wore heavy Mexican spurs, which clanked and jingled as they walked about in a manner that would have made a blind man think he was in the company of a lot of convicts in transit. In the company were some few faces that were familiar to me. In one who was pointed out to me I recognized a man whom I had seen many years ago in a pool room at a race meeting, where he was paying \$250 for first choice. He

has been "broke" twice since then, and is now getting rich for the third time.

Occasionally this door would be opened to allow some of the "help" to pass in or out, and those nearest it would make a rush toward it, and as often find it slammed in their faces, at which those in the rear of the crowd would laugh immoderately. Finding myself not far from the door, I was touched on the shoulder by a good-natured rancher who pointed to an empty seat on a bench not far from the door, with the remark, "Stranger, if you want to get any grub afore morning, you jest camp right thar."

I did as directed, and when the door was finally opened I plunged into the stream of rugged humanity that was pouring through it, and after a good deal of squeezing and jostling I finally found myself seated at one of the long dining-tables. The meal, though roughly served of course, was an excellent one, the grass-fed beef on the table being quite as fat and as fine in texture and flavour as the best Christmas beef usually is. The meat was devoured by Mr. Camoose's hungry customers with surprising rapidity, and there was a steady hum of voices all the time. A great deal of slang pervaded the conversation, and not a little profanity, but though there was some pretty rough joking all were extremely good humoured. A good deal of the slang used here would not be understood in Ontario. As everybody rides on horseback here, and as even the Indians have their Kyuses, a man is never spoken of here as ruined financially, or, as it is often put in Ontario, "broke;" he is "set afoot," or "out of luck." I heard a man complaining to-night that "some thieving, lop-eared son of a stuffed monkey" had "set him afoot for a knife," and consequently he wanted to borrow one.

West of "Camoose & Steele's" ("Steele" being a fictitious personage, and only put in to make the sign convey the idea of "thief and steal"), there is a huge mud-hole extending half-way across the street, and two-thirds full of the filthy drainage from the adjoining cattle-corrall. On the palisades is posted the following:—

BATHING NOTICE.

BATHS, TWENTY-FIVE CENTS; CHILDREN HALF-PRICE.

HOURS.

Children from 10 a.m. till 12 noon.

Ladies from 12 noon till 4 p.m.

Gentlemen from 4 p.m. till 7 p.m.

Clothing at Owner's Risk.

As present, McLeod appears to be very lively, but I shall have more to say about it when I shall have had time to "do" it thoroughly.

CHAPTER XXVII

INCIDENTS AND OBJECTS OF INTEREST AT FORT MCLEOD—HORSE-STEALING ACROSS THE BORDER—IMPROVED CONDITION OF THE MOUNTED POLICE FORCE—DUTIES OF THE FORCE—NECESSITY OF ITS BEING STRENGTHENED—PROSPECTS OF TROUBLE THROUGH INDIAN DEPREDACTIONS.

FORT MCLEOD, Sept. 18.—To-day was rather a quiet one for His Excellency and party. This forenoon Dr. MacGregor preached an excellent sermon in the little Canada Methodist Church here, the pulpit of which is usually occupied by the Rev. Mr. McLean, of this place. The little church was packed to the doors and the sermon was listened to with the liveliest interest by all present. This afternoon, through the courtesy of Major Crozier, the commandant, I was shown through the fort, which consists of a substantial stockade, including about 125 yards square. Inside the stockade are barracks, officers' quarters, workshops, guard room, &c., &c. In the guard room were eleven prisoners. First on the list comes the Blood Indian, Star-Child, who is charged with the murder of Constable Grayburn in November, 1879. The circumstances of the murder were as follows:—Grayburn was herding a lot of police horses about five miles from Fort Walsh. On the morning of the murder he left the horses to ride to the old herding ground three miles further from the fort, where he had left a picket rope and an axe in a half-breed's cabin. He did not return, and the other herdsmen searched for him unsuccessfully all that night. In the morning they sent in word to the fort that Grayburn was missing. A general search was then instituted and the body of the murdered man was found where it had been thrown over a cut-bank about fifty or sixty yards from where he is supposed to have been shot; and three hundred and fifty yards in a thick bush in the bottom land, standing erect, with his head tied up to a tree so closely that his fore feet were off the ground, was his horse, it having been shot through the head with Grayburn's own carbine. The murder is supposed to have been committed on the 17th, but the body of the man and the dead horse were not found till the 19th. From the tracks it appears that after the murder and the hiding of the body the murderer had started for the lines, but thinking that the horse might run back to the herd, he returned, and driving him into a close thicket as far as he could go and until his fore feet were resting upon a mass of ice and snow, he tied him up close to a tree and shot him through the head. The body was supported in an upright position partly by the surrounding trees and branches and partly by the bridle, and it is supposed that the melting of the ice and snow from under his feet left his fore part partially suspended by the bridle as it was found. In the meantime the supposed murderer made his escape across the lines, and for a long time the identity of the perpetrator of the shocking crime remained a mystery. It was known that Star-Child, in company with

another Blood Indian named Weazel Moccasin, went south of the lines to Bear Paw, in Montana. It seems at the time Grayburn was murdered a small band of Blood Indians, including Star Child, Weazel Moccasin, Eagle Breast, Weazel Child, and others were encamped near the place, and that at this time, according to his deposition, Weazel Moccasin conceived the idea that Star Child was the murderer, and that when they were down at Bear Paw the latter made a confession to him. His story is a rambling and improbable one altogether, but it is not unlikely that ultimately both he and Star Child may be proved to have had a hand in the crime. Star Child is a small and rather delicately-formed Indian, who looks wonderfully like a Chinaman, and the fact that he wears his hair in long closely-plaited braids rather strengthens his resemblance to the Mongolian family. When the door of his cell was opened he sprang from his bunk where he was lying (attired only in undershirt and drawers), and with a little nervous laugh shook hands with me. He is very quick and nervous in all his motions, but he has a weak look both in face and figure. From his appearance one would hardly suppose that he was the man either to plan or carry out the shocking crime with which he is charged. At the same time it is not improbable that he might have acted under the guidance of some one of stronger will. Yesterday his father was admitted to see him. They met, but Star Child only kissed his father and then told him to go away, that it made him too sad to see him. Among the other prisoners was Jingling Bells, a Blood Indian, a notorious horse-thief, who, along with two others, was captured about nine miles south of this fort on the night of the 9th inst. with a band of twenty-two horses, which they had run off from Morleyville. The capture, which was a very plucky one, was made by a small party under command of Inspector Dickens, the youngest son of the famous novelist. There were also some deserters who were undergoing sentences for desertion and horse-stealing. In fact, all the constables who desert from here are apt to be horse-thieves, as they invariably take police horses with which to make their escape across the lines. It is but justice, however, to add that in cases where they have made their escapes they have handed over the horses to the American authorities to be returned to the force.

There were other Indian horse-thieves in the guard-room, undergoing sentence or awaiting trial.

On the south side of the lines horse-stealing is unfortunately very common, and it appears that Montana, though full of soldiers, is unable to put a stop to it. Whenever American horses are stolen and brought into the North-West Territory they are invariably captured by the Mounted Police and restored to the owners, but if horses are stolen here and taken across the lines they are seldom heard of. In fact the state of affairs prevailing here presents a marked contrast as compared with that south of the 49th parallel. There the settlers occasionally lynch a horse-thief, but for one that is caught a great many escape. Here, such a thing as lynching is unknown, and though Fort McLeod is full of refugees from Montana, and desperadoes from all parts of the Western States, crime of all sorts is kept well in hand. A few

months ago there was a good deal of whiskey selling here, and gambling and other vices of various sorts were practised openly. Now, however, under the administration of Major Crozier, the Police Superintendent here, everything of the sort is being stamped out, so that nearly every trace of it is fast disappearing. In contrast to this may be given the details of an awful tragedy that took place in the latter part of June or early in July in Montana, only a little way south of the line. A Mrs. Armstrong, who formerly lived here, was carrying on a cattle ranche on the Teton River, fifteen or twenty miles from Fort Benton. She was in partnership with a man named Morgan, who lived in the house with her along with two girls, adopted daughters of Mrs. Armstrong. On the night in question a hired man about the place took a shotgun and murdered both Mrs. Armstrong and Morgan, and chasing the little girls to the bush outraged one of them and attempted to ravish the other. Subsequently the little girls saw and identified the murderer and miscreant (whose name is Stewart) at a neighbouring ranche, and he was taken in charge by the deputy sheriff. A band of masked men took him from the officer, however, and started for the nearest tree large enough from which to hang him. They offered to take him along in a waggon, but he declined quite cheerily, remarking, "There's nothing mean about me boys; I'll walk." He was led over to the tree with the rope on his neck, and mounting the waggon he quietly watched the lynchers make fast the rope to the limb of the tree, and as the horrible work was completed he coolly said in the same cheerful tone, "It's all right, boys; drive on with your waggon." And the waggon was driven on, and the miserable wretch was left dangling between earth and heaven.

In Montana every man travels armed as a measure of personal protection; liquor is sold freely to the Indians, and carried over Indian reservations with impunity. Gambling goes on openly, and the law is everywhere set at naught. Here, though there is only a handful of about three hundred mounted police to preserve order in a territory over nine hundred miles long by more than five hundred miles wide, containing a wild, warlike, and semi-starving population of twenty-five thousand Indians and about six thousand scattered settlers and ranchers, of whom a large proportion in the southern district are ex-whiskey traders and refugees from the American laws, the best order prevails. I have travelled over twelve hundred miles through the North-West Territory with horses and waggon; I have camped sometimes alone, and sometimes close to the police camp; I have had no means of locking up anything, and my whole outfit has always been exposed to the depredations of any persons who might be disposed to meddle with it, and yet, with the exception of one blanket, nothing has been stolen from me in the whole journey. Though I have travelled hundreds of miles with only my half-breed guide for company, I have never carried a revolver, and have never kept my shot-gun loaded in my tent. To suppose that such a state of affairs could exist here without the presence of an admirably organized and thoroughly efficient police force would be the wildest nonsense. Whatever may have been the state of the force in the past I do not know from any personal

knowledge, but as to its present state under the commissionership of Colonel Irvine, I am certainly in a position to know something, and so far as I am able to judge, I cheerfully testify, not only to the excellent character and soldierly conduct of the officers and men, but to the thorough efficiency of the force, and the invaluable service it is now rendering the Dominion in this territory. I have heard complaints against the force here and elsewhere throughout the territory, but all these complaints have reached me through the medium of deserters, men who have been turned out of the force for bad conduct, and ex-whiskey traders who have suffered in pocket through the suppression of the whiskey traffic by the force. I have talked a good deal, and very freely, with the constables and non-commissioned officers of the force, and without exception I have found them intelligent, thoroughly well-disposed young gentlemen, proud of the standing and character of the force, strongly attached to the Commissioner and the officers in command of their respective posts, and pleased with the country and the mode of life they are called upon to lead. The only semblance of fault-finding that I heard was of the low rate of remuneration (40c. per diem for recruits) and the character of some of the uniforms served out to them, and in these respects I must say that I think there is room for improvement. As to the work the Mounted Police force is performing in the North-West, no one not intimately acquainted with the country can be in a position to judge. The officers and men have, to a very great extent, secured the confidence and good will of the Indians. The red men are not only afraid to come into forcible contact with the red-coats, but they feel that their best interest lies in assisting the police in the discharge of their duties. They have confidence in the justice of the administration of the police and feel that the Indian rights will be protected as well as those of the white men. Instead of seeking redress for wrongs in the usual Indian way by force or strategy, they complain to the constituted authorities and in all respects recognise the fact that the white man's way of administering justice is better than their own.

The present organization of the Mounted Police force is as follows:—Col. A. S. Irvine, Commissioner; Capt. John Cotton, Superintendent and Adjutant; Major Walsh, Superintendent; Major Crozier, Superintendent; Col. Herchmer, Superintendent, and two vacancies; Mr. Franch, Inspector; Mr. Shurtleff, Inspector; Mr. McIlree, Inspector; M. Gagnon, Inspector; Mr. Dickens, Inspector; M. Frechette, Inspector; Mr. Steele, Inspector; Mr. Antrobus, Inspector; Mr. Neale, Inspector; Mr. Greensbach, Inspector; Mr. Dowling, Inspector; Mr. McDonnell, Inspector; Surgeon Kennedy, and Surgeon Miller. There are six troops, A, B, C, D, E, and F. There is a superintendent commanding each troop, a sergeant-major to each troop, one quarter-master sergeant to each post, three sergeants, and four corporals. In addition to these there are staff-sergeants, such as veterinary sergeants (including Surgeons Oliver and Riddell, graduates of the Ontario Veterinary College), armoury sergeants, saddler majors, wheelwrights, &c. There are also tailors, shoemakers, blacksmiths, and other mechanics chosen from the

rank and file, who receive fifteen cents per day extra while in the performance of their mechanical duties.

Each superintendent has a district in which he exercises the powers of a justice of the peace, and the commissioner acts as a stipendiary magistrate. Inspectors, if appointed, act as justices of the peace in their districts. In this connection it may be suggested that the powers of the superintendent might with propriety be extended, as there are many trivial cases that have to lie over for a long time in the necessary absence of the stipendiary magistrates.

While no one can doubt the efficiency of the force as it is at present, there are some features that would be the better for a change. I cannot but think that forty cents per day is too small for a recruit in this country. Everything he has to buy costs an extravagant price, and as he has to keep his kit in good order, he is often obliged to make very serious inroads into his pay to accomplish this. If he wishes to use anything in the shape of luxuries he can easily spend the whole of his available funds upon them. For example, canned salmon, such as costs from twelve cents to fifteen cents in Toronto, costs fifty cents here. Canned fruit or jams cost one dollar by the pot or can. I saw a gentleman pay three dollars and fifty cents for a whip lash the other day that would not cost more than twenty cents in any city in Ontario, and so far as I have been able to observe, nearly everything else is proportionately dear. It will easily be understood that the barest necessities of life will quickly run away with the recruit's first year's pay.

THE RECRUITING SYSTEM.

Another evil with which the officers of the force have to contend is the manner in which recruiting is carried on. If when recruits were wanted they were allowed to advertise in the newspapers for a month before the men were wanted, there would be no difficulty in securing the most desirable class of men. Clause 6 of the Police Act says:—

"No officer or constable shall be appointed to the police force unless he be of sound constitution, able to ride, active, and able-bodied, of good character, and between the ages of eighteen and forty years; nor unless he be able to read and write either the English or French language."

If members of Parliament and others who recommend recruits for the force would bear this clause in mind I think very many who are now offered to the recruiting officers would never trouble them. Last May, when Col. Hatcher was in old Canada recruiting, he desired to advertise, but was told that out of 125 written applications to the Department backed up by members of Parliament he could surely secure the complement of ninety men, which was all he required. He went to Montreal, and from among the fifty-five applicants there he was only able to select twelve. Here, too, he found a man who had written repeatedly to Ottawa for blank forms of application for admission to the force. This man desired to be in the room where the recruits were being examined, saying that he wished to be there to see that

"his men" were passed. Col. Herchmer excluded him, however, and presently an attenuated Frenchman presented himself, whose application stated that he was five feet nine inches high, and measured thirty-eight inches around the chest. When measured, however, he proved to be five feet three inches high, and was only thirty inches around the chest. "What made you tell such a falsehood in your application?" demanded Col. Herchmer. "That man told me to do so," he replied, "so that they think me a big man." "What man?" asked Col. Herchmer. "The man that gave me this paper," he replied, pointing to the application. "Did you pay him anything for that paper?" "Yes, I gave him one dollar, and I am to give him five dollars more as soon as I am passed." But he did not pass.

As has already been pointed out in the commissioner's report, the best men for the force are farmer's sons accustomed to hard work, rough weather, and the care and management of horses. There is plenty of good material for recruits in old Canada, and I am convinced that a very little judicious advertising would greatly lighten and simplify the duties of recruiting officers. Now that settlers and ranchmen are rapidly coming into the North-West it is very evident that the force must be greatly strengthened, and the sooner this is done the better for the safety of the best interests of the Dominion in the North-West.

DUTIES OF THE POLICE.

The duties of the police in the North-West are unique and multifarious, and there is scarcely even a constable that is not often in a position that requires prompt decision and resolute action. There is not a branch of the military service throughout the British Empire in which so much is expected of the intelligence and executive ability of the men as in this. They are often on the open prairie in the direct straits where the success of the enterprise upon which they are engaged, and their own lives as well as those of their horses are dependent upon their ability to act promptly and intelligently. The success of an expedition is often dependent upon the ability and willingness of the men to undergo the most terrible privations, fast for days at a stretch, and stick to the saddle when overpowered with fatigue, and yet they have always come bravely through these crucial tests, and not one in a thousand of the people of old Canada know what these gallant fellows have done and are every day doing for the Dominion. It may well be said of the Mounted Police "They never give up." Half a dozen men and an officer have often marched into a camp of hundreds of menacing savages to make an arrest, and sometimes the force has been even smaller than that mentioned, and yet they have never for an instant wavered in the discharge of their duties. It is needless to say that while the men are one and all proud of the force to which they belong and of the Commissioner and the officers under him, the Commissioner and his officers are justly proud of the efficiency and capabilities of the handful of men under their command. The time when this small force can no longer maintain peace and good order throughout this vast territory is rapidly approaching, and I think the pressing ne-

cessity of at once greatly strengthening it cannot be too strongly urged upon the Dominion Government.

The following lines, which present a really truthful picture of the life of the prairie troopers, and were written by an ex-constable, who is now a settler in the North-West, may not be inappropriate in this connection. They are entitled

THE RIDERS OF THE PLAINS.

I.

So wake the prairie echoes with
The ever welcome sound ;
Ring out the "boot and saddle" till
Its stirring notes resound.
Our chargers toss their bridled heads,
And chafe against the reins.
Ring out ! ring out the marching call
For the Riders of the Plains.

II.

O'er many a league of prairie wild
Our trackless path must be,
And round it rove the fiercest tribes
Of Blackfeet and of Cree,
But danger from their savage bands
A dauntless heart disdains—
'Tis the heart that bears the helmet up,
Of the Riders of the Plains.

III.

The prairie storms sweep o'er our way,
But onward still we go,
To scale the weary mountain range,
Descend the valley low.
We face the broad Saskatchewan,
Made fierce with heavy rains,
With all his might he cannot check
The Riders of the Plains.

IV.

We tread the dreaded cactus land,
Where, lost to white man's ken,
We startle there the creatures wild
With the sight of armed men.
For wheresoe'er our leader bids
The bugle sounds its strains ;
Forward in sections marching go
The Riders of the Plains.

V.

The fire king stalks the prairie,
And fearful 'tis to see
The rushing wall of flame and smoke
Girdling round us rapidly.
'Tis then we shout defiance
And mock his fiery chafin ;
For safe the cleared circle guards
The Riders of the Plains.

VI.

For us no cheerful hostelries
Their welcome gates unfold ;
No generous board, no downy couch
Await our troopers bold.

Beneath the star-lit canopy
At eve, when daylight wanes,
There lie these hardy wanderers—
The Riders of the Plains.

VII.

In want of rest, in want of food,
Our courage does not fail,
As day and night we follow hard,
The desperado's trail.
His threatened rifle stays us not,
He finds no hope remains,
And yields at last a captive to
The Riders of the Plains.

VIII.

We've ta'en the haughty-feathered Chief,
Whose hands were red with blood,
E'en in the very Council Lodge
We seized him as he stood.
Three fearless hearts faced forty braves,
And bore the chief in chains,
Full sixty miles to where lay camped
The Riders of the Plains.

IX.

But that which tries the courage sore,
Of horseman and of steed,
Is want of blessed water,
Blessed water in our need.
We'll face like men whate'er befalls,
Of perils, hardships, pains ;
Oh God ! deny not water to
The Riders of the Plains.

X.

And death who comes alike to all
Has visited us here,
Filling our hearts with bitter grief,
Our eyes with many a tear.
Five times he drew his fatal bow,
His hand no prayer restrains ;
Five times his arrow sped among
The Riders of the Plains.

XI.

Hard by the Old Man River,
Where freshest breezes blow,
Five grassy mounds lie side by side,
Five riders sleep below.
Neat palings close the sacred ground,
No stranger's step profanes
Their deep repose, and they sleep well
These Riders of the Plains.

XII.

There is no marble column,
There is no graven stone
To blazon to a curious world
The deeds they may have done.
But the prairie flower blows lightly there,
And creeping wild rose trains
Its wreath of summer beauty o'er
The Riders of the Plains.

XIII.

Sleep on, sleep on, proud slumberers
Who died in this far west,
No prancing steed will feel your hand,
No trumpet break your rest;
Sleep on, till the great Archangel
Shall burst death's mortal chains,
And you hear the great "Reveille"
Ye Riders of the Plains.

XIV.

We bear no lifted banners,
The soldier's care and pride,
No fluttering flag waves onward
Our horsemen as they ride.
Our only guide is "duty's" call,
And well its strength sustains
The dauntless spirits of our men,
Bold Riders of the Plains.

XV.

We muster but three hundred
In all this "Great Lone Land,"
Which stretches o'er this continent
To where the Rockies stand;

But not one heart doth falter,
No coward voice complains
That few, too few, in number are
The Riders of the Plains.

XVI.

In England's mighty Empire
Each man must take his stand;
Some guard the honoured flag at sea,
Some bear it well by land;
'Tis not our part to fight its foes—
Then what to us remains?
What duty does our Sovereign give
Her Riders of the Plains.

XVII.

Our mission is to plant the reign
Of British freedom here,
Restrain the lawless savage,
And protect the pioneer;
And 'tis a proud and daring trust
To hold these vast domains
With but three hundred mounted men—
The Riders of the Plains.

XVIII.

And though we win no praise or fame
In the struggle here alone—
To carry out good British law
And plant old England's throne;
Yet when our task has been performed,
And law with order reigns,
The peaceful settler long will bless
The Riders of the Plains.

Complications with United States authorities are likely to arise before long through the depredations of Indians on both sides of the lines, and it may be as well that the Canadian public should be informed as to the true state of the case before the necessity for action arises. I believe that already the United States Government has appointed a commission for the purpose of ascertaining the nature and extent of the losses incurred by American ranchmen and others through the slaughtering of their cattle and stealing of their horses by Indians (principally Bloods, Blackfoot, and Piegiens) from the Canadian side of the lines, and I understand claims for repayment by the Canadian Government are to be submitted. If this be true similar action should at once be taken by the Canadian authorities. Again and again have American Indians stolen horses from both settlers and Indians on the Canadian side of the lines, and thus far the American authorities have been much more remiss in recovering and restoring stolen property than have the Mounted Police. Here, too, their Indians have committed their depredations in cool blood, as they can get no liquor on our side of the lines, while our Indians have been cheated of their goods and ponies by American whiskey traders whom they have met south of the lines, and after being set afoot in this way and crazed with poisonous liquor, it is not surprising that they

should slaughter cattle and steal ponies to "get even." The better way for both countries will be to make these crimes extraditable offences, and then, and not till then, will they be able to stamp out horse-stealing and "cattle-lifting" along the border.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE MCFARLANE RANCHE—HISTORY OF A PRAIRIE PIONEER—SEVERAL TRIBES HOLD A POW-WOW BEFORE HIS EXCELLENCY—DEXTEROUS RIDERS AND NIMBLE PONIES—CATTLE RAISING IN THE RANCHE—PRICE OF FARM PRODUCE AND LABOUR—HOW CAPITAL AND INDUSTRY PAY.

THE MCFARLANE RANCHE.

FORT McLEOD, Sept. 19.—This morning I drove down to the McFarlane ranche about two and a half miles east of this place, and after looking over the farm, grain, stacks, and dairy I had a conversation with Mr. McFarlane relative to his operations in this region. After spending eight years in the mining districts of the Western States he came to his present location five years ago without any capital whatever, except a very small herd of cattle. To show as the result of five years' operations here, he has, besides considerable money at interest, 1,000 acres of land fenced on the south bank of Old Man's River, 100 acres of which are now under cultivation, 300 head of cattle, and twenty head of horses. His crop this year consisting of wheat, barley, oats, and potatoes, is already bargained for at about the following prices per pound:—Wheat, 5c.; barley, 4c.; oats, 5c.; potatoes, 3½c. and 4c. The cash proceeds of this crop will be between \$3,500 and \$4,000. In addition to this and the natural increase of his herd Mr. McFarlane's dairy of thirty-five cows produces 4,000 pounds of butter annually, and this butter sells in summer for 50c. and in winter for \$1 per pound. The demand for all sorts of farm produce, even at the prices above quoted, is far in excess of the supply. Beyond the cost of agricultural implements Mr. McFarlane's outlay consists of the wages of one man all the year round and three extra men during the summer. Good farm labourers receive from \$35 to \$40 per month with board, and Mr. McFarlane tells me that he has a great deal of trouble to secure good men at the figures I have quoted. This year Mr. McFarlane's crops will average about as follows:—Wheat, 25 bushels to the acre; barley, 35; oats, 50; and potatoes, 200. All root crops have done extremely well on this ranche, and there is an excellent market for produce of all sorts. Mr. McFarlane's cattle are mostly from Montana, and he has found the cows more than ordinarily good for dairy purposes. Indeed, the average farmer or stock-raiser would be greatly surprised to come upon a herd of these Montana cattle feeding on the rich buffalo grass in this region. Instead of the long-legged weedy looking brutes that in

former days were wont to be driven into Canada from Texas, he would find a handsome looking lot of animals that would readily pass for thoroughbred shorthorns and very high class grade cattle, and instead of looking lank and hungry, they would look very much like stall-fed animals out for a few hours' exercise. Indeed no one who has not seen them would believe the wonderful change that has been effected in the character of these wild cattle, through the introduction of highly prepotent bulls from the closely inbred shorthorn families. As an evidence of the extraordinary adaptability of this region for stock-raising Mr. McFarlane informed me that though last winter was one of the most unfavourable for cattle that had been known here for ten years, a cow which had run out and picked her own living all winter, was driven in off the range and killed by him in March, and though she had never had a pound of feed beyond what she had picked up in the prairie, she was as fat as any choice stall-fed beef he had ever seen. Her kidneys and the fat adhering to them weighed no less than ten pounds, and after all she was by no means an exceptional animal in the herd. Mr. McFarlane also keeps a large number of hens, and all the eggs that he does not require to use in his own house sell readily at a dollar a dozen. He has also tried the experiment of sheep raising on a small scale, and the results so far have been very satisfactory. Last year his sheep clipped an average of nine pounds of excellent wool. His horse-keeping costs him next to nothing, as his little band of twenty mostly consist of Kyuses and Bronchos that pick their own living and keep fat on the prairie all winter. From all that I can learn I do not think that the case of Mr. McFarlane is at all an exceptional one, or that he has done anything that any intelligent settler who has plenty of pluck and industry might not accomplish in the same length of time; and yet I would like to know in what part of Old Canada the same results could be reached by a man similarly situated, in the same length of time.

Another settler with whom I had a lengthy conversation this morning was Mr. G. F. Washter, of Baden, Germany. Mr. Washter has had a chequered career. Born of a wealthy family in Germany he came to the United States in 1846. During the Crimean war he was recruiting for the British army in New York, and shipping his men to Halifax. He finally enlisted himself, but when he reached Constantinople peace had been established, and returning to the United States he settled in Louisiana, where he accumulated a handsome property, and was located comfortably with his wife and family. When the American war broke out he joined the Southern army, and at the end of that terrible conflict he had not only lost the whole of his property but worse than all, his wife and family. Commencing life anew he first established himself as a cotton shipper, and finally came to the Western States, ultimately coming into the country of the Blackfeet as a whiskey trader. On one of these expeditions, before the international boundary was established and definitely known, he and his partners were overtaken by the U. S. officers, who attempted to arrest them and take away the liquor. Washter told them to "stand off," that for all they knew he might be on Canadian soil, and fearing that he might be, the officers let him alone.

He was subsequently one of the proprietors of the notorious whiskey fort, "Whoop Up," and ultimately in 1874 or 1875, while trading at Sheep Creek, he killed a Spaniard in self-defence. He then fled this country and lost every dollar he was worth. Ultimately he returned and gave himself up here at McLeod, and was honourably acquitted. Once more he had to begin afresh in the world, and five years ago he settled upon his present location, eighteen miles from here, and near the Blood Indian Reservation. He named his ranche "Stand Off," and began life with a capital of \$15 in his pocket and no other property of any kind, besides being \$1,000 in debt. This was five years ago, and now he has 500 acres of choice land fenced, 100 acres of which are under crop. He has an excellent band of carefully selected cattle, 132 in number, twenty good horses (many of them much more than ordinarily valuable), and a very fair share of ready money. His grain crop this year will realize very little, if anything, short of \$4,000, and his dairy is now producing forty pounds of butter per week. He employs one man all the year round, and two or three extra men in harvest. He pays the same rate of wages quoted by Mr. McFarlane, and says that he has great difficulty in securing the services of steady, respectable farm labourers. Though he has forty milch cows, tame and well broken, Mr. Washter only milks nine of them; as he cannot secure help to manage a dairy on a large scale. His crops, he tells me, will yield about the same per acre as Mr. McFarlane's, but several others who have seen them tell me Washter has considerably under-estimated the yield of his own crops. Last year he tried the experiment of sowing timothy seed on the high uplands, which many think will not be productive without irrigation, and the result is that he has a hay field that will cut four tons to the acre. This is a most important discovery, as it proves that the upland benches are far more productive than is generally supposed.

AN INDIAN POW-WOW.

This afternoon the grandest Indian pow-wow that has taken place during His Excellency's tour through the North-West was held in the large plain just east of the Fort. There were about 3,000 Indians, squaws, and papooses present, and the display of ponies was a really splendid one. Promptly at two o'clock, the hour appointed for the council, the Indians came swarming in from the different camps that had been made at different points about the Fort. The Blackfeet and Sarcees had occupied a position just north of the Fort, the Bloods were just west of the village, and the Piegans a mile further west. Most of them were mounted, many of the ponies carrying two and even three individuals. The day was bright and warm, and I need not add that the brilliant dresses of the aborigines and their piebald and white Pinto ponies (many of the latter fancifully painted in bright colours) made a splendid display as they neared the pavilion where His Excellency was to receive them. Before settling down to the business in hand the Indians had a sham fight on horseback, and the skill they displayed in handling their sprightly, nimble and sure-footed ponies was really marvellous. They never guide them by the bit, if by chance they happen to have one, but merely by

the pressure of the lasso on either side of the animal's neck. Indeed many of the ponies were merely guided by the rider leaning over to right or left according to the direction in which he wished the pony to turn; and the accuracy with which they would guide their horses in this way, even when the animals were at full gallop, was simply wonderful. At one time when they were galloping around in a circle at full speed they kept enlarging the circle till one or two of the riders actually touched their moccasins against me as they dashed past at full speed. Indeed, it seemed as if they could guide their ponies to an inch with the utmost certainty. I should think these handsome and clever little ponies would be perfection itself for Polo. They are very light of foot, nimble and tractable. They will stop, start or turn with lightning rapidity, they have uncommonly sound and strong feet and legs, and they are up to almost any weight. I weigh 185 pounds and I have an active little fourteen-hand pony that feels as strong under me as any sixteen-hand horse I ever mounted. After a very fine display of their wonderful horsemanship, a few fantastic dances, and a sham fight on foot at close quarters, the latter being very suggestive of a contest between "supers" on the stage, the Indians swarmed about the pavilion in great numbers, where His Excellency and suite, Colonel and Mrs. McLeod, Mr. Dewdney, Indian Commissioner; Colonel Norman McLeod, Local Indian Agent, and a splendid looking guard of honour under command of Colonel Irvine, Commissioner N. W. M. P., were waiting to receive them. The Council was very like others which have preceded it. A number of chiefs of Bloods, Blackfeet, Piegiens and Sarcees addressed His Excellency. They all spoke in the highest terms of Colonel McLeod and Mr. Dewdney, and the Piegiens were particularly anxious that their farm instructor should remain with them "as long as the water runs in the Old Man's River." The chiefs also spoke in the most complimentary manner of Colonel Irvine, and of the force under his command, whom they regard as their best friends. At the close of their speeches, His Excellency spoke very kindly to them, and gave them some thoroughly good and practical advice. Some of the Indians present boasted of names that would look rather startling in a city directory. "Calf Shirt" was riding up and down in front of the pavilion, telling with great satisfaction how he had killed three Crees down at "Whoop Up" in one day. Amongst other distinguished individuals present were "Running Rabbit," "Eagle Tail," "Red Cow," "Dog's Child," "Bull's Backfat," "Buffalo-cow-in-the-middle," "Many-spotted-horses," "Belly Bute," "Going-to-the-bear," "The-man-who-walks-on-his-heels," "Father-of-many-children," "Eagle-sitting-on-a-rock-with-his-tail-hanging-over," "Bad-head," "Bull-shield," "Bull-turning-around," "Weazel-eagle," "Counting-coo" (recital of brave deeds), "Counting-coo-on-the-top," "Low Woman" (a Blood Indian), "White Antelope," "Running Wolf," "Blackfoot-old-woman" (a Blood Indian), "Wolf-collar," "Wolf-shirt," "Morning Plume," "Flying Chief," "Chief Mountain" (for Canon McKay), "Chief Bird" (for Rev. Mr. Trivett).

To-morrow morning His Excellency and party start westward to visit the Police and Indian Supply Farm on Pincher Creek.

CHAPTER XXIX.

HIS EXCELLENCY NEAR THE BOUNDARY—INDIAN DEPARTMENT SUPPLY FARM—INCIDENTS
IN CROSSING OLD MAN'S RIVER—NOBODY SERIOUSLY HURT—THE FOOTHILLS OF THE
"ROCKIES"—AN EVENING RAMBLE.

PINCHER CREEK, Sept. 20.—This morning His Excellency and party bade good-bye to Fort McLeod, where they had spent a really enjoyable time despite the fact that it is the "hardest" place, so far as morals are concerned, to be found in the North-West, while the location is anything but picturesque or romantic. The journey to-day has been a rather long thirty miles, almost due west from Fort McLeod. At the fort the mountains do not look more than four or five miles off on a bright day, and to one unacquainted with the country the idea of driving thirty miles in a westerly direction from Fort McLeod without penetrating well into them would appear manifestly absurd. We have come a long thirty miles to-day, and yet we are not quite up to the base of the mountains though they appear very close at hand. The journey was not a particularly interesting one. The country for a mile or two west of Fort McLeod, though very fair farming land, is not nearly up to the average of what I have seen so far throughout the North-West Territory. It appears to be light and somewhat stony. This sort of soil was only seen for a short distance, at less than two miles west of the fort the character of the benches or uplands began to improve, changing to a rich black loam similar to that seen all along the trail from Calgary to McLeod. We had not gone more than three miles, however, before the trail led down into the bottom lands of Old Man's River. Here the soil appeared rather light and gravelly, and though the grass was good and strong, I do not think it could be depended upon for anything like heavy cropping. About twelve miles from McLeod the trail crossed Old Man's River, and here there came near being two serious accidents. The river at the Ford is deep and swift, and the east bank, though not high, is very precipitous. The four-horse team hauling His Excellency's ambulance descended the bank safely, but just as they were in the deepest and swiftest part of the stream one of the wheel horses began to plunge, and put his fore feet over the lead bars. This threw him on his side, and but for the very clever and plucky manner in which he was handled by his driver he would have been drowned. Mr. Dewdney and I came next, and made the passage safely enough, as did several others, but when the cook's waggon came along, bringing a large share of the commissary stores, cooking utensils, tableware, and some of His Excellency's personal luggage, the leaders swerved suddenly at the water's edge, and the heavily-laden waggon rolled down the embankment into the deep, swift stream. Fortunately the horses got free from the waggon and hauled the driver out by the reins, while the other constable with this waggon, after disappearing into the river under

the load, floated out with the swift current apparently uninjured. The damage done to the load was not so serious as anticipated, though some very handsome antelope skin Indian costumes, purchased at McLeod by His Excellency, received a thorough wetting. A few miles beyond the crossing, the Indian village on the Piegan Reserve was reached. The place was deserted; however, as the Indians had not yet returned from the fort, whither they had gone to meet the Governor-General. This is certainly one of the oddest looking villages I have ever seen. The Indians have built their little cabins just where they pleased, without any reference to streets. The houses face in all directions, but no two appear to have been built either parallel with or at right angles to, each other. They are built of small logs, plastered with mud, and roofed with poles, rudely thatched with straw and mud. All have doors of some sort, and some few have windows. The roofs are nearly flat, and the walls are, in many cases, far from forming rectangular parallelograms, while very few of them have perpendicular walls. They are vastly better than wigwams or teepees, and it is to be hoped that this rude attempt on the part of the Piegans to conform to the customs of the white men will not be unattended with good results. A few miles farther on the house of Mr. Charles Kettles, the farm instructor of this reserve, was reached. Mr. Kettles appears to be on excellent terms with his pupils, and though I do not regard the reserve as a good one, the Piegans are evidently making very fair progress. There are forty-eight acres broken on this farm, the crops are only moderately good, and Mr. Kettles is of opinion that the place is unfit for raising anything like heavy grain crops. The farm instructor was also of opinion that the land in this whole vicinity is rather light and patchy for agricultural purposes. In addition to being a popular man with the Indians, Mr. Kettles appears to be an excellent woodman, as the remarkably neat axe work on his house, root-house, and outbuildings abundantly prove. The Indians are rationed three times a week at the farm, and the produce of the farm is stored for rations during the winter. Re-crossing Old Man's River the outfit proceeded to Pincher Creek, where the Police and Indian Department Supply Farms are located. This is a beautiful valley, and there are already several settlers doing well here. To-night His Excellency and party are encamped at Col. McLeod's house, and Mr. Dewdney and I have our tent pitched at the police farm nearly two miles farther up Pincher Creek. The weather is keen and cold to-night.

PINCHER CREEK, Sept. 21.—This has been a cold, wet, and very disagreeable day, and I have spent most of the time in camp. Lord Lorne, Dr. MacGregor, Mr. Austin, Mr. Sidney Hall, and Captain Bagot remained in camp while Col. De Winton, Major Chater, Capt. Percival, Dr. Sewell, and Mr. Dewdney went out shooting, and enjoyed a very fine afternoon's sport. This afternoon I crossed the creek and visited Mr. Milton Morden, who settled here late last fall. Mr. Morden formerly lived north of Toronto. As yet he has hardly had time to form an opinion of this country, but so far he thinks extremely well of it. He has seventy-five head of Montana cattle

that are doing well. His crops are looking well, and though he has yet broken but a small portion of his ranche, he is in a fair way to do well.

The Police farm, a very pretty location, is in charge of Major Shurtleff. Here the brood mares belonging to the force are kept. There are also a number of promising colts that have been bred on the farm, while there are usually some temporarily unserviceable horses recruiting on the place. Clandeboye, a chestnut horse by Enquirer, out of Leisure, by Red Eye, is the herd stallion in use. Just now the herd is short some 74 animals that were run off by American horse thieves, along with some fifty or sixty horses and ponies in August, but the animals were recovered by some ranchmen south of the line, and Major Shurtleff is now absent at Fort Assiniboine to claim them from the American authorities, who are holding them till he arrives. There are on this farm some two hundred acres under crop. The most of this is sown with oats, six acres being in potatoes and one small field in barley. The oats turn out about 30 and the potatoes 150 bushels to the acre. The weather is still cold and dreary, and there is no promise of any immediate improvement.

PINCHER CREEK, Sept. 22.—The weather was bright and comparatively pleasant to-day, and immediately after breakfast Mr. Dewdney drove down to His Excellency's camp in order to accompany him and his party seven miles southward along the valley to the Indian Supply Farm, and there take leave of them. In the valley we passed the claims of several settlers, all of whom appeared to be doing well. Mr. Steed has a very promising looking claim, which is already beginning to wear the appearance of a prosperous homestead. He has a large neat-looking frame house two stories high, and everything about the place wears a look of comfort and prosperity.

The Indian Department Supply Farm was reached by eight o'clock, and His Excellency and friends were welcomed by Mr. Bruce, the agent. Here some time was spent in examining the products of the farm and in questioning Mr. Bruce regarding the character and peculiarities of the region in which he is located. There are 310 acres broken and fenced, of which four acres are in wheat, fifty acres in oats, sixty-five acres in barley, twelve acres in potatoes, twenty-three acres in turnips, and one acre in carrots. One hundred and sixty acres of the land broken is still idle, because it was impossible to get seed for it. During the summer Mr. Bruce had an average of five men employed about the farm, but during the winter only a cook and three men will be employed. He is now working twelve horses, but says that he should have more in order to get the work along properly. He keeps four cows to supply the house with milk and butter. Mr. Bruce did not talk very encouragingly of the country here. He said in fact that "it had been made for buffaloes and Indians." His crops he reports as follows:—Wheat, 25 bush. to the acre; oats, less than 20; and barley, 30 bush. to the acre. His potatoes are very light, and his turnips very fair. The surest crops according to Mr. Bruce are barley and roots of all sorts. He thinks, too, that oats would be safe if put in in proper time, and in this connection he made a suggestion which, though not at all new in this country, appears to be a very sensible

one. It was that seed should be put in late in the fall; too late to germinate the same year, but ready to begin growing as soon as the frost goes out of the ground in the spring. Altogether Mr. Bruce appears inclined to take what I think to be an unnecessarily gloomy view of the future of the beautiful region in which he is located. The summers, he says, are very uncertain; and he cited the unseasonable snow storm of August, 1880, in proof of his views. He does not think the bench lands would afford sure crops, and altogether he thinks the Indian Farm is much too near the mountains to be valuable for agricultural purposes. He said that last winter was very cold and stormy. There were in his region only two Chinook thaws, each of them lasting some three weeks. He described the winters here as very unreliable, and held that a farmer could not count on any work with a moderate degree of certainty during the winter months. It was a good cattle country, however, as the wind usually kept the hills swept bare and left the grass exposed for the cattle. He was of opinion that any hardy timber would grow on the prairie. Altogether he considered the country much better adapted for stock-raising than agriculture. Here we were shown some remarkably fine samples of grain that had been grown on the place. One stool of oats contained 23 stocks, with from 85 to 93 grains to the stock. The samples of wheat showed 70 stocks to the stool, and from 43 to 55 grains to the stock. The farm is supplied with an excellent quality of bituminous coal from a seam about four feet thick less than a mile from the house and up towards the mountains.

GOOD-BYE.

As soon as the "evidence" of Mr. Bruce "had been taken," His Excellency and party prepared to continue their march to the frontier, which, though perhaps a day's journey or more from this point, is easily located by the naked eye by landmarks along the mountain range. And here Mr. Dewdney and I took leave of them, and not without many regrets, for the journey through the North-West, despite many annoyances and some little hardships, has been to me one of the most thoroughly enjoyable I ever made. From first to last His Excellency and every member of his party have treated me with the kindest consideration and there is not one of them who has not shown the most friendly interest in the success of my expedition. Had I been one of his invited guests, His Excellency could not have taken greater pains in affording me every facility for obtaining information concerning the country through which we have travelled, and while I have been allowed to feel that I was travelling quite independently of the Vice-Regal outfit, I have always found in Lord Lorne the most genial and neighbourly of fellow-travellers. On every expedition which I wished to join, whether in quest of game or information, I was always a heartily welcomed guest. Whenever I had troubles through breakdowns or other mishaps, His Excellency invariably showed the kindest interest in my welfare, and when my half-breed had been taken seriously ill on the plains below Carlton, he was one of the first to walk over through the wet grass to my tent and enquire personally as to

his condition. Indeed, I am very sure that I shall greatly miss such exceedingly genial and friendly travelling companions on the long and lonely trip that now lies before me, and on which I determined as soon as I learned that Lord Lorne had abandoned the idea of travelling down Bow River and the South Saskatchewan by boat. To-night or early to-morrow Lord Lorne and his party will cross the 49th parallel, and then of course the interest in the country through which they are travelling will cease so far as Canadian readers are concerned. On the other hand, though our trip through the North-West has been a long and comprehensive one, a large and important section has unavoidably been left out. Edmonton, though acknowledged to be one of the most prominent points in the North-West, has not been seen, nor has the long stretch of country lying between it and Battleford, as well as that portion of the trail (some 200 miles in length) between Calgary and Edmonton.

My present intention is to return to Calgary, and then drive up the trail to Edmonton, and if possible visit St. Albert. I shall then take what is known as the "south trail" from Edmonton to Battleford. From Battleford, instead of taking the back track to Carlton, I shall take a more southerly course, and not take in any of the trail previously travelled till I reach Qu'Appelle. At that point, passing far south of Carlton and Prince Albert, I shall take the old trail to Fort Ellice, from which place I shall probably drive down to Brandon, and travel thence to Winnipeg by the railway, which it is expected will have reached the crossing of the Assiniboine some time before I can reasonably expect to drive to it. I am not ignorant of the fact that I am taking some little risk of having to spend a portion of the winter in this territory, by starting on such a very long drive so late in the season, and I am very sure that the nights are even now so cold that camping out is anything but a cheerful occupation. In returning, I shall have to travel through a good deal of open country, where the collecting or packing of any more wood than that absolutely necessary for cooking would be quite out of the question. I do not expect to see many places where my half-breed and I can afford the luxury of a roaring camp-fire. Snow-storms are liable to visit us occasionally, or what are equally bad, cold rain-storms. The trails, too, will in all probability be much worse than many of those over which we have travelled, and should any mishaps overtake me, I can no longer look for that friendly assistance which the officers and men of the escort were always ready to render me. In fact I feel as though I had now done with the enjoyable part of the journey, and as if the rest of it would be a tedious succession of hardships and privations. At best I shall have a long, cold, lonely journey before I can reach Winnipeg again.

Returning to camp in time for luncheon, Mr. Dewdney and I crossed to the north side of Pincher Creek, early in the afternoon, and taking the westward trail that leads up to the Indian Department mill, set out to visit that establishment. The bench lands over which we travelled were well covered with a rich growth of buffalo grass, and it looked to be well adapted either for stock-raising or agricultural purposes. In the bottoms were the ranches

of several settlers, who appeared to be doing well, but in this connection I may remark that the pioneers in the region underrate the value of the bench lands as compared with the bottoms. It is, of course, well enough to build houses, barns, and corrals in the bottoms, where they are afforded a natural shelter from the winds that sweep over these great plains, but I think that on the benches is usually found a better quality of soil, while it is an established fact that the frosts are nearly always more severe on the low bottoms than on the uplands. In most of the valleys of these mountain streams the soil is rather light; and though capable of growing excellent grass, I think it is often too light for constant cropping.

The Indian Department mill is situated on the east bank of what is now known as the "Mill Stream," which falls into Old Man's River a short distance below the mill site. The mill itself is only a small affair, having but a limited grinding capacity (the gristing machinery, though on the ground, is not yet in place) while the saw-mill is only capable of cutting between two and three thousand feet per day. The mill site is an excellent one, however, and the limits, or at least what I saw of them, in walking about five miles southward and up the creek, are really excellent, taking into consideration the limited supply and probably strong demand that may be expected in this country for lumber of almost any sort. The forks of the creek are well-timbered with a sort of red spruce, which though hard to cut and work up, is very strong and durable. In my short walk up to the mountains I saw a great many trees that would measure from eighteen inches to two feet across the stump, and long enough below the branches to cut logs of clear stuff from twelve to eighteen feet in length. These trees are called pine by some, while others assert that there is no true pine on this side of the water-shed; but be this as it may, I am very sure that there is a large quantity of really good timber on the fifty-mile limits belonging to this mill. From what I could see from the slopes of the mountains with a powerful glass I should imagine that within a radius of twenty miles from this mill there is a very large amount of timber that must in a few years become extremely valuable.

AN ACCIDENT.

Just as we arrived at the mill the workmen and others about the place were in a state of the wildest excitement. Only a few moments before we had reached there the jointer in the shingle mill had burst, and Joseph Field (formerly of Prescott, Ont.) was terribly and, in all probability, fatally injured. The mountain slopes above the mill tempted me into taking a long walk (to which I have already alluded in connection with the timber limits belonging to the mill). Following the east bank of the mill stream, I walked up to where its tributaries pour into it from a dozen or more deep ravines and canyons that look as though the base of the mountains had been shivered and rent by some tremendous force, leaving a number of long, deep, and tortuous ravines, with rugged and precipitous edges. Although I had only started with the intention of walking about a mile up the creek, I kept climbing a succession of foot-hills, the view from each summit luring me on to the next;

till at last I found that I had gained an extraordinary altitude, and the rugged, snow-capped peaks looked so near that it seemed as if I could almost reach out my hand and touch the hem of their fleecy, spotless robes. The evening, though bright and pleasant, was fresh and cool; and though the yellow and brown slopes of the foothills were resplendent in the slanting rays of a glorious September sun, I could at times feel a breath of the evening air that felt as nipping and frosty as though it had drifted over a snow-covered plain in mid-winter. Suddenly, however, I found myself in a deep cold shadow, and looking westward I noticed for the first time that I had already so far exceeded the time I had allotted to this little excursion that the sun was already sinking behind one of the great pyramidal peaks of the "Rockies."

Thus warned, I began very reluctantly to turn my steps towards the mill. By this time I was considerably east of the main body of the mill stream, as its most easterly fork ran down a deep ravine which formed an almost impassable barrier as far as I followed its east bank. This stream was rather tortuous, and though I followed its general direction I did not keep close to the edge of the ravine, and was thus enabled to save considerable time by cutting off some of its curves. In crossing one of these bends, where the stream made a deep swerve westward, I noticed a small band of about thirty Montana cattle feeding about a quarter of a mile inland. I had often heard that it was dangerous to venture near these brutes on foot, but they looked so unlike all my preconceived ideas of wild cattle (which I supposed to be nearly all horns and legs, with very light bodies), and so like a herd of well-bred and well-fed Shorthorns that I could not believe them very dangerous. For all this, however, I gave them a very wide berth in passing; but just as I was, as I supposed, safely out of their reach, I heard a heavy trampling behind me, and turning I saw the whole herd trotting towards me. I was now close to the edge of a cut bank, however, and feeling tolerably secure I continued to walk on deliberately, as though I had not noticed them. They were not to be trifled with, however, and tossing their heads furiously, and bellowing as they came, they charged at full gallop. I ran thirty or forty yards, and jumped over the edge of the cut bank, but they had no notion of stopping even after I had disappeared. As they neared the bank I sprang up and fired a shot in the air from my rifle, and sprang another cartridge into the chamber to use in a more serious manner should it become necessary. At the crack of the rifle, however, the brutes stopped short, and after hesitating a few seconds they turned and galloped off in the opposite direction.

As I walked farther down the branch and reached the mill stream, I turned and looked up the deep narrow valley through which it runs, and here I saw one of the loveliest and most romantic of landscapes spread out before me. The deep canyon-like valley which opened in the foreground, reached backward and upward away through the middle distance and into the background, where it was lost in the deep rich bronze of the foothills, while above and beyond rose the great sharp mountain peaks wrapped in their pure, spotless

mantle of newly fallen snow. All along the valley were to be seen the brilliant autumnal tints on the frost-nipped foliage, in which light pea green, lemon-chrome, straw colour, gold, orange, scarlet, and crimson were daintily blended, relieving the black green of the spruces, and the deep purplish bronze of the leafless brush and furze. Behind the great snow-capped peak on the right the sun was still shining, and its beams, streaming through the lofty wind-swept passes and narrow gorges among the mountain crests beyond, fell in bright belts and patches across the gorgeous medley of rich colours that adorned the shadowy slopes of the long deep valley.

Hurrying back to the mill, I was soon in Mr. Dewdney's buckboard again, and we reached camp about nine o'clock to-night.

CHAPTER XXX.

DANGER OF AN INDIAN WAR—NORTH-WEST COAL SECOND ONLY TO ANTHRACITE—STRANGE PHASES OF LIFE AT FORT McLEOD—FORT McLEOD SLANG—ABUNDANCE AND EXCELLENCE OF THE COAL—TEMPTATIONS OF INDIAN INSTRUCTORS—HORSE AND CATTLE THIEVING—AN INDIAN OUTBREAK THREATENING.

FORT McLEOD, Sept. 26—Since the last instalment of my journal was written, incidents have been so few and far between that a daily record would have been an exceedingly scanty one.

The absence from the police force of the large band of horses stolen by American thieves; the deterioration of some 200 that at one time or another have been employed in transporting His Excellency and party across the plains from the end of the railway track to the Rocky Mountains, and the absence of the large outfit under Colonel Crozier, that is now carrying him over the last stage of his long overland trip, have so reduced the number of available horses here that it has been necessary to delay my departure for Calgary beyond the time I had expected. During my stay here, however, I have thoroughly enjoyed the novel phase of society presented by the always-shifting population of Fort McLeod, which is wholly unlike anything to be seen in Old Canada. Here in the shadow of the Rocky Mountains, even Canadians are no longer the same men they were in Canada. They ride on horseback; wear Mexican spurs, utterly abjure English, Canadian, or indeed any but Mexican saddles, and talk the slang of frontiersmen and ranchers. Indeed, everybody who lives here for a month appears to drift imperceptibly into using the local slang. Only yesterday I heard an old coloured woman describing how for fifteen months she did the work in a gentleman's family here and took care of the baby all the time. She said, "I jest used to have him with me from morning till night, an' when I had any other work to do

I jest used to 'picket' him by one foot to the stove-leg and let him pull away till I was ready to take him up again."

Comparatively few of the rougher element here go by their own names, and as illustrative of this I will relate a well authenticated story, just as it was told to me. An esteemed Catholic priest was visiting here, and the gentleman who was walking up street with him desired to introduce a friend. Seeing his friend across the street he called him over and said, "Froggy, let me introduce you to Father ———," and "Father ——— permit me to present a very old friend whom I have known for fourteen years, Mr. — Mr. — ah—why, Froggy, what the h—l is your name; you never told me?"

Among the names by which men are known here may be quoted the following:—"Poker Brown," "Red Fitzpatrick," "Tennessee," "California," "Buck Smith," "French Sam," "Nigger Dave," "Spanish Joe," "Dutch Fred," "Tin-cup Joe," "Yeast Powder Bill," "Diamond R. Brown," "Water-cart Billy," "The Pointer," "Sitting Bull," "Vanderbilt, No. 2," "Goose Neck," "Texas Jones," "Vici," "Captain Jack," "Banjo Mike," "Old Smooty," "Tex" (for Texas), "Bear Paw Jack," "Farr-Jack-Bob," and "Rutabaga Bill." Among the half-breed women are "The Gopher," "Croppy," "Cut Nose," and "Waggon-box Julia." There are also "The Mule Family," and the "Jocko Outfit," by which two well-known half-breed families are designated.

Since my arrival here Major Shurtleff has returned with the seventy-four police horses, and a large number of the ponies stolen from the Police Farm in August. They have come back looking very well.

I met Mr. Dawson, of Montreal, the other day, and had the pleasure for a few moments of listening to his views regarding this country, which he has been carefully exploring for some time. Regarding the soil, I found that he had little to communicate that would be new to those who have been reading my journal as it has been published, but his views on other matters connected with this region were full of interest.

COAL

He was of the opinion that for the present, at least, very little could be made by operating the coal mines here. This was not because of any deficiency in the quantity of excellent coal to be found, but because the coal is so very generally distributed, that it would scarcely pay miners to work it for local consumption. Indeed, there appears to be such an abundance of coal along the base of the mountains, from the Belly River up to Edmonton, that the question of fuel for the great plains is virtually set at rest. The coal here is not the common lignite (as it is generally supposed to be in Old Canada), but a high grade of bituminous coal, equal, if not superior, to any grade below anthracite. There is an extensive deposit near Whoop Up, and another large seam near the Indian Department mill, eight or ten miles west of the Police Farm, on Pincher Creek. There is excellent coal on High River, and in many other places in this section.

To-day Mr. Dewdney has been hard at work investigating the character of the farm instructor on the Blood reservation, but as yet the case is not quite concluded. Mr. Dewdney, I may say, appears to be thoroughly in earnest about his work, and he will, I think, in time, have his troublesome charge in a greatly improved condition; but in the meantime he has many difficulties to contend against, not the least of his troubles being the securing of suitable farm instructors. To be a good farm instructor, a man should not only thoroughly understand farming and have a faculty of imparting what he knows, but he must have that knowledge of Indian character that can only be acquired by a permanent residence among them. In addition to all this, a man to succeed as a farm instructor must have his heart thoroughly in his work. He must have the perseverance and patience, and *should* have the enthusiasm of a thorough missionary. Besides all this, he should be a competent and thoroughly upright business man, for the temptations to speculation are often very strong, and it is extremely difficult to check over the details of a farm instructor's operations for a year. It is an easy thing for the farm instructor and the contractor who supplies him to combine and swindle both the Government and the Indians. Suppose, for example, that the Indians are being rationed at three pounds of flour and six pounds of beef each per week. This for a band of 500 souls would amount to fifteen sacks of flour and 3,000 lbs. of beef passing through the instructor's hands every week. It is an easy thing to deduct 25 per cent. from an Indian's rations without his knowing it, every time they are served out to him; and if this were done the instructor and the agent would have the opportunity of dividing between them 375 lbs. of flour and 750 lbs. of beef every week, and this at 10 cents per lb. for flour and 10 cents per lb. for beef, the rates at which I buy my supplies, would amount to a weekly drawback of \$37.50 on the flour and \$75 on the beef, leaving the nice little sum of \$112.50 to divide between the instructor and contractor every Saturday night. I do not mean to say that anything of this kind is done, but I mention the figures to show how easily it could be done, and how much responsibility rests upon Mr. Dewdney, who is expected to see that the business transactions on all the reservations are properly conducted. To suppose that the average man who depends for a livelihood upon some sort of a position in the Civil Service is fit for such an appointment, is manifestly absurd. The men who are of the right stamp for work of this kind are scarce and their services are usually in too great demand for private enterprises to permit of them being hawked around Ottawa for vacancies in the Civil Service. It is not surprising then that Mr. Dewdney must necessarily be greatly embarrassed in the working of his department. At the same time he has even now many very capable and upright men serving under him, but until the matter of appointments shall have been made a question of fitness and merit, rather than of political patronage, his efforts at putting his department in thoroughly efficient working order must be very heavily handicapped. Even as it is, however, the Indian Department is performing a very valuable service. Many of the Indian bands are taking hold of agriculture with a hearty good will, and in Big Child's

reserve, near Carlton, they are nearly, or quite, self-supporting. The Pie-gans, who are located near here, are also making good progress though their reserve is a poor one and though they have only been on it for a short time. As for the Blackfeet, on the reservation at the lower crossing of Bow River, they have made very unsatisfactory progress, and it is not at all improbable that both they and the Bloods may make serious trouble before the winter is over. They have paid little attention to their crops and appear to take much more kindly to predatory raids and horse-stealing than they do to farm labour. Crowfoot complained at the Council, which we attended, that his rations were not what they ought to be, and I think it is not at all impossible that he may have good ground for complaining, and so there may be serious trouble brewing, for the Bloods, Blackfeet, and other wild Indians of the south are not the class of men to be trifled with. They are, I think, more resolute and warlike than the Crees and Saulteaux of the north, and should they once break out in defiance of the police I cannot but shudder to think of the possible results. Though so far the police have been able to make arrests of Indian depredators in the face of overwhelming odds, the general impression among the best informed frontiersmen is that this game of bluff is about played out, and that the day when three or four red-coated prairie troopers, through sheer pluck and coolness, can overawe a large band of Bloods, Pie-gans, or Blackfeet has now nearly, or quite, passed by, and that in future the greatest caution will have to be exercised in dealing with these lawless, half-starved savages. Even now horse-stealing and "cattle-lifting" is going on in various quarters in spite of the vigilance of the handfuls of police stationed at different points throughout this great stretch of country, and settlers and ranchmen are threatening to take the law into their own hands. Should they do so the most frightful results will be sure to follow, and a general uprising of the Indian tribes might confidently be predicted. No matter what the cost may be, I think the police force should be doubled and the Indian Commissioner should be invested for this winter at least with absolute authority to grant to the Indians such supplies as may be necessary to keep them from starving to death. It will certainly be cheaper to feed these Indians than to fight them, and should they once set the authority of the Government at defiance, there is no force in this region that could reasonably be expected to enforce that authority in the presence of overwhelming numbers of hostile savages. Now that the buffalo has returned to this country, the trouble may be staved off this winter, but in the long run I think it would be better for the Indians had the buffalo never come back. The presence of buffalo diverts even the best of them from agricultural pursuits, and they relapse into their old modes of life, to which they are ardently attached. The presence of the buffalo also operates unfavourably in another respect. It sets them looking about for swift-footed ponies suitable for the chase, and as these are too costly for destitute Indians to buy they are apt to adopt the only course left to them, and steal what they require. Only a short time ago the Bloods stole a band of ponies from the Stonies at Morleyville, and the sufferers are so enraged at their loss that it would be very unpleas-

ant for any unfortunate Blood who might fall in their way. In short, while it is very easy to find fault with the management of any troublesome department like this, it is not quite so easy to suggest any changes that would, under present circumstances, be thoroughly safe and satisfactory. It will cost a good deal of money to make the 25,000 Indians, that have been driven away here to the base of the Rocky Mountains, by the progress of settlement, prosperous and law-abiding citizens, but I think the policy now being pursued, that of teaching them to make a living through agriculture and stock-raising is a sound one, as every Indian who succeeds in making for himself a competency in this way will exert a very powerful influence for good upon others of his own race. As soon as he has a band of cattle or ponies, or a little ranche under crop, he becomes a friend of law and order and an ally of the white settlers, while his comparative wealth invests him with exceptional weight and influence with his own people. Thus it will be seen that every dollar now judiciously spent in encouraging industrious, thrifty Indians may, a very few years hence, save the expenditure of hundreds of dollars in fighting hostile or feeding starving ones.

To-morrow I shall set out on my long and dreary drive of twelve or thirteen hundred miles to Brandon via Edmonton and Battleford. I have heard some very unfavourable reports concerning the Edmonton trail (which I trust are somewhat exaggerated) and as we had a snow-storm to day I am not oblivious to the fact that I may have some very ugly and possibly dangerous snow-storms before I reach the railway. I have learned, however, to discount to a certain extent the tales told by the travellers about the depth of muskegs, the swimming of rivers, the fury of snow-storms, &c., &c., and at all events I have no doubt as to my duty in the matter. Edmonton is one of the most important settlements in the North-West, and I regard it as of the last importance that I should visit it before I return to the comforts and enjoyments of what is commonly termed here "civilization." If my ponies pull through all right, the horse thieves keep away from my camp, I hope to land safely enough, and as I have four good Kyuses they are not likely to wear out. While if the horse-thieves attempt to "set me afoot" they will require to be extremely cautious, if they do not desire to find their numbers depleted before getting out of range of the Winchester rifle which Captain Percival was kind enough to loan me for my return trip.

CHAPTER XXXI.

LOST IN A SNOW STORM—LASSOING A WILD BRONCHO—A HERD OF ANTELOPES
ACROSS THE TRAIL—TRAVELLING ON THE PLAINS IN COMFORTABLE STYLE
—HOW A GALT MAN EMIGRATES—CATTLE RANCH LOCATIONS.

PINE COULEE, Sept. 27.—This morning I set out on the first stage of my homeward journey. As my outfit was at Calgary, I took passage in a light buggy drawn by a single Kyuse, with Mr. J. J. McHugh, superintendent and agent of the Indian Department Supply Farm at the junction of Fish Creek and Bow River, nine miles this side of Calgary. The weather this morning was cold and drizzly, with flurries of snow falling at intervals. We crossed the river safely enough and drove out across the open prairie beyond, and as the clouds began to break away to the northward we confidently looked for fine weather, but we had not been out an hour when we were met by a cold, wet, blinding snow-storm, which lasted for nearly an hour. Then the storm broke before a bitterly cold north wind, but this again was followed by a snow storm, and this sort of weather continued for the whole of the forenoon. About one o'clock we stopped for dinner at the point where the trail leaves Willow Creek (the place is locally known as "the leavings"), and ate a cold lunch after having made repeated failures in attempting to light a fire. As I had left my baggage to be forwarded by a heavier waggon, we had no tent, axe, or indeed anything in the way of an outfit except Mr. McHugh's blankets, and consequently we were particularly anxious to reach the tepees on Lynch and Emerson's ranche at High River before camping for the night. In the afternoon the weather was bitterly cold, and as the roads were heavy and the Kyuse a light one we made slow progress.

Half an hour before dark we found an outfit in camp on the trail in which there was a handsome covered waggon, a single buggy, a number of loaded carts, and a band of horses and ponies. We halted, according to the custom of this country, and were very happy to accept, for the night, the hospitality of the proprietor of the outfit who proved to be Mr. Geddes, of Galt, Ontario. Mr. Geddes has formed a partnership with Mr. Allan Patrick, a rancher in this region, whose range is on Ghost River, between Calgary and Morleyville, and he is now on his way bringing in his freight and supplies by way of Cypress and Fort McLeod. Mr. Patrick having gone up by the way of Red Deer River with a large band of high-bred cattle and the well-known trotting stallion St. Joe (by Blackwood), all of which Mr. Geddes had brought with him from Galt. It is not often that any one is found travelling on the prairie more comfortably equipped than Mr. Geddes is. He has his wife and son (a lad of twelve years) with him, and their arrangements are as complete as could be wished. The covered spring waggon is so arranged as to make a

very comfortable sleeping apartment for Mr. and Mrs. Geddes, the small tent is occupied by the teamsters, and the larger tent in which there is a light sheet iron cooking stove serves as a cooking, dining, and sitting-room and a sleeping apartment for Master Geddes and the servants. After an excellent dinner, we spent a cheerful, pleasant evening by the cosy fire in the cooking stove, though the cold wind was howling dismally over the boundless prairie outside. Not long after dinner Mr. Geddes' Scotch servant came to the door of the tent and asked for his violin, and a few moments afterward the familiar strains of "The Lass o' Gowrie" reached us from the neighbouring tent, weirdly mingled with the moaning and whistling of the cold night wind. For half an hour or more we listened to this strange concert in which the wild music of the western pampas was blended with the stirring strains to which "many a stubborn Highlandman" has marched to his last couch of blood-stained heather, and it seemed as if the violin only sounded the theme, while in the fierce roar and shrill piping of the winds careering over the plains we could hear a hundred wild variations played by troops of ghostly pipers whose bones long since lay beneath the blood-stained sod of Culloden, Flodden Field, or Bannockburn. Mr. and Mrs. Geddes have insisted on our spreading our blankets in their tent by the cooking stove, and despite a most unpropitious start this morning, my first camp on my northward trip promises to be a comfortable and even luxurious one.

INDIAN SUPPLY FARM, FISH CREEK, Sept. 29.—I did not write up my journal last night, and when the reader has learned of my experience of yesterday he will not be particularly surprised that I neglected to do so. When we turned out in the morning we found that the wind had gone down during the night, and that it had been closely followed by a hard frost. Our wraps and gloves had completely dried by the stove, however, and I enjoyed the, to me, rather unusual luxury of dressing by a comfortable fire. While Mr. McHugh put up his blankets and loaded the buggy I went down into the coulee and caught the pony, and a few minutes after breakfast we bade good-bye to Mr. and Mrs. Geddes and resumed our journey. About noon we reached the tepee on Messrs. Emerson & Lynch's ranche at High River, and here we met Mr. Stimson, of Compton, P.Q., who has taken up one of the finest cattle ranges in the Bow River country for the Rocky Mountain Live Stock Company, of which he himself is the resident and managing partner. The range consists of a beautiful tract of grazing country extending some thirty miles along High River from a few miles above the crossing of the McLeod trail up into the Porcupine Hills. The soil is strong and rich, and the grass is of the very best quality. There are good summer and winter pastures, excellent sites for corrals, calf pastures, &c., and plentiful supplies of good, pure water. In short, it is in all respects a first-class range, and by this time next year it is the intention to have it stocked with 4,000 Montana cattle, 40 Hereford, Polled Angus, and Galloway Bulls, together with all the horses necessary for herding, and a complete outfit of farming implements and tools. Instead of having his cattle brought in by contract, as is the custom of ranchers here, it is Mr. Stimson's intention to have his cattle brought in in two

bands by his own men, under his personal supervision. When cattle are brought in by contract nearly all or quite all the calves that are dropped on the way are lost, and the horses used in herding are hired for the occasion, and of course they go back with the contractors. Mr. Stimson, however, intends to purchase 100 horses for herding, and buy two bull trains, which will carry all the baggage and furnish at least a day's ride to every calf dropped *en route*. In this way he will save to his herd not less than 1,000 calves at least, which in one year will be worth not less than \$20,000 on the range. The 100 horses brought in with the cattle can be bought much more cheaply in Montana than they would cost here, and they will all be needed on the range, while the bull trains will always be useful for freighting supplies from Fort Benton. After dinner Mr. McHugh took a fresh horse and saddling him rode on to the farm, leaving Mr. Stimson and me to come along with the buggy to which Mr. Stimson's kyuse was now harnessed, the pony which we had driven from Pine Coulee being led beside him. We had only gone about two miles from camp when a herd of ten beautiful antelopes galloped across the trail within easy rifle shot ahead of us. My rifle was in its case, however, and before I could get it out they were far out of reach. Two miles further on we came upon Messrs. Emerson & Lynch's band of horses, and here I had the opportunity of witnessing the lassoing of a wild Broncho. There was a large, splendid-looking horse in the band which Mr. "Nep" Lynch desired to catch. Mr. Lynch, one of the most perfect horsemen in the North-West, was mounted on a handsome chestnut, furnished with a double "cinched" (girthed) Mexican saddle and a beautiful lasso of braided rawhide. As he neared the herd in which there were some seventy or eighty horses, they galloped off like a band of frightened deer. As soon as they started Lynch put spurs to his horse and followed them at a rattling pace, and was soon among them. In an incredibly short space of time he had singled out the roan gelding and managed to separate him from the rest of the band, and then followed a most exciting chase. The roan would dash off at full speed and then wheel like a flash and run in the opposite direction; but the chestnut would turn as suddenly as he could, and though the ground was rough and full of badger holes, both pursuer and pursued would sweep over the prairie at break-neck speed. Once the lasso was thrown and missed its mark, but the next throw, a very long one, was more successful, and the noose encircled the flying roan's neck. Quick as thought the chestnut stopped and braced his forefeet in the sod, the rawhide rope ran out its full length till the knot on the horn of the saddle checked it, and the roan gelding was brought up with a sudden jerk that almost twitched him off his feet, and so the capture was accomplished. It was nearly dark when Mr. Stimson and I reached Sheep Creek (or Rocky River, as the Indians call it), and after getting down into the low bottoms beside it, but before crossing, we changed horses again, putting in the little chestnut once more, which Mr. McHugh had driven from Pine Coulee that morning. We then crossed the ford, and in the deepening twilight we hurried along the bottoms on the north side of the creek, as we had still some

fifteen or sixteen miles to drive, and the night threatened to be intensely dark. It was quite dark and beginning to storm when we reached the upland benches north of the river, but we pushed on as rapidly as the darkness and the wretched state of the trail would permit till we had gone some seven miles. At this point Mr. Stimson got out and searched for traces of the trail that branches off the Fort McLeod and Calgary road, and leads to the "Indian Farm," as it is called. It was no easy matter to find it however, and we lost fully two hours in looking for it, and when at last it was found it was impossible to follow it in the darkness. We now had no choice but to follow the Calgary trail to Mr. John Glenn's, and after camping there for the remainder of the night drive to our destination the following morning. We accordingly stuck to the deeply cut trail leading to John Glenn's, though we knew it was a very roundabout way of reaching the Indian Supply Farm. We were both wet and cold, and in addition to this we knew that we should now have to make the journey in a bitter and furious snowstorm. As we drove along the storm became still more boisterous, and in the midst of this we came to "Sue" Coulee (named after one of the leaders of a mule team that were stuck here for some hours). Here the main trail was almost cut out, and it became necessary to leave it for one of the fresher ones made by the bull trains. The snow now appeared to be sweeping down upon us from all directions at once, and with such blinding fury that often we could not see the horse. Still, we kept ploughing along, following the bull trail only by keeping the wheels in the deep ruts which the heavy waggons had cut in the soft ground. At length, after what in our half-blinded condition appeared to be innumerable windings through the deep mud and long grass and brush in the coulee, and until it seemed as if we had crossed two coulees instead of one, we reached the well-worn trail again, which the pony managed to follow without any difficulty. I now noticed that the storm had ceased to blow squarely in our faces, but as for the last half-hour it had been blowing in all directions, I was not surprised at the apparent change. Though we were both warmly clad we now began to feel thoroughly chilled, as our outer wraps were almost wringing wet, and we could feel the dampness fast penetrating our underclothing. Presently we began to look anxiously for Pine Creek, which we knew could not be far off according to our reckoning. After a long and weary drive, during which we were almost benumbed with the cold, we found ourselves descending a narrow ravine, which led us into an open bottom lined on one side with timber, which we supposed must mark the course of Pine Creek. The trail skirted along the edge of the light timber for some two and a half miles, and then forked into the bush in different directions. I jumped out of the buggy, and taking the right-hand trail, followed it to the stream. The wet, snow-laden bushes drooped over the path so thickly that the snow and water dropped in my face and down my neck at almost every step; but at last I found myself at the edge of a swift-running, roaring, torrent, which was very unlike the narrow, innocent-looking Pine Creek I remembered crossing when travelling with Lord Lorne's outfit on the way to McLeod. It was so intensely dark I could

not see the opposite bank of the stream, but there was a deep shadow there that looked like a high-cut bank, and I at once decided that this could not be the regular crossing, so I returned to the buggy and we pushed along through the drooping snow-laden branches of the light cottonwood till we were once more on the brink of the stream. Though we could not see the opposite shore, we could see more water before us than could possibly flow through Pine Creek, while the loud roar of the swift current gave us the impression that the ford before us was by no means a very nice one to cross in the pitchy darkness that surrounded us. The bank was rather steep, but little "Alex" plunged boldly into it as though he knew all about it, and trusting to his apparent superior knowledge of the locality, Mr. Stimson, who was driving at the time, let him take his own way of finding the opposite shore. The ford was a very rough one, and the dark torrent surged swiftly around the old buggy till it was nearly up to the box; but still the pony walked steadily along till it seemed as if we should never reach the opposite shore. At last we were up into the timber on the opposite bank, and we were neither of us very sorry, for it was very evident that we had crossed a stream of considerable size, fully equal to the Elbow. We now began to speculate very carefully as to where we could be. Mr. Stimson was very sure that there was no trail in the region that was as well defined as that upon which we were travelling except that leading from Fort McLeod to Calgary, and yet the only large stream ahead of us after crossing Sheep Creek was the Elbow, and to reach it we would have to cross both Pine and Fish Creeks. On we drove through the timber and at length as we reached the more open part of the bottom lands the clouds broke a little, and one star glimmered faintly just in front of us. I saw it was not the north star and asking Mr. Stimson to halt for a second, I peered carefully around and in the pale, uncertain light I detected the outlines of three old, gnarled cottonwood trees of unusual size, which I had noticed in Sheep Creek bottoms where we had changed six hours before, and it was now midnight.

When we came to think it over it was all simple enough. The bull teams had crossed at Sue Coulie half-loaded, and after reaching the main trail north of the bad place they had thrown off the load and then swung on in a circle with the empty waggons after the remainder of their loads. In the blinding storm and darkness we had swung around their whole circle, and had taken the back trail at the south side of it. We led the ponies off into the timber, and unharnessing "Alex" we turned them both loose and then, wet, chilled, and benumbed as we were, attempted to light a fire. We had no axe, and had to do all the cutting with Mr. Stimson's hunting-knife. The task was a tedious and discouraging one, for everything around us was wet, and again and again our fire flickered and went out. After more than an hour's patient working, we managed to get a rousing fire ablaze against a large fallen cottonwood, and carrying huge logs on our shoulders, that we could barely handle with our united strength, we had a fire going by two o'clock in the morning that effectually warmed both of us. Spreading blankets and buffalo robes before the fire, we wrapped ourselves in them and slept comfortably.

till-daylight, though the last sounds we heard were the long, mournful howl of the great timber wolf mingling with the dismal soprano of the coyote. This morning the weather was bitterly cold, and as the pony was dull and tired we were pretty hungry and cold in making a drive of some fifteen or sixteen miles before breakfast (having eaten nothing since yesterday at noon); but now that we are safely landed at the Indian Supply Farm, we can afford to laugh over our dismal adventure of last night.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE INDIAN SUPPLY FARM—GOOD PROSPECTS FOR INTENDING HORSE AND CATTLE RANCHERS—DETAILED ESTIMATE OF THE COST OF EACH RANCHE—WHAT KIND OF ANIMALS TO STOCK WITH—THE VALUE OF POLLED ANGUS AND GALLOWAYS—KYUSE, MARES AND OTHER QUALITIES—A COMING DEMAND FOR MULES—CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF THE CHINOOK WINDS.

INDIAN SUPPLY FARM, FISH-CREEK, Sept. 30.—To-day I have spent most of my time in walking over the Indian Supply Farm and in chatting with Mr. Stimson and others about ranching in the Bow River country.

The Fish Creek Farm is beautifully located on the angle formed by the junction of Fish Creek and Bow River. There are broken here some 447 acres of land, but only 220 acres are cropped this season as it is the intention of the manager to try the experiment of cropping the land only in alternate years until he shall have enough live stock to furnish the manure necessary to put the land in proper trim for heavy and constant cropping. This season he sowed 65 acres in oats, 75 acres in barley, 50 acres in turnips, and 30 acres in potatoes. He estimates his products this year as follows:—Oats, 40 bushels per acre; barley, 55 bushels per acre; turnips, 300 bushels per acre, and after allowance has been made for potatoes (which were damaged by frost) 150 bushels per acre. The farm is under the management of Mr. J. J. McHugh, formerly farm instructor at Edmonton, but promoted to his present situation on the 15th of last April. During the past summer Mr. McHugh had an average of five men employed on the farm, an average of three pairs of horses and two yokes of oxen. The farm buildings consist of a good house of hewn logs with shingle roof, a large corral, and two log horse-stables. A good granary is now now being added to the list of farm-buildings. In connection with this season's product of the farm I should have added that Mr. McHugh put up 100 tons of excellent hay last summer. The farm itself is a remarkably fine one, most of it lying in the bottoms of Fish Creek and Bow River, though Mr. McHugh has some remarkably fine fields up on the benches. Everything about the farm wears a thrifty and

business-like look, and though much remains to be done (as is always the case on new farms in a new country) the manner in which the work is being done and the general appearance of the farm reflects the highest credit, not only upon Mr. McHugh, the agent and superintendent, but upon the Ontario Agricultural College, from which he graduated. The object for which these farms were established was to supply seed and rations for the Indians. Turnips and potatoes are issued instead of equal values in flour, and the red men are usually very glad to avail themselves of the exchange. Roots are easily raised in this country, and when the Indians are taught to use them by being rationed with them, they are at the same time encouraged to grow them.

Cattle ranching promises to be one of the great industries of this region, and perhaps a few particulars concerning it may not be uninteresting. Among the leading cattle ranchers in the vicinity of Pincher Creek, and Old Man's River, is Captain Stuart, of Ottawa, who with his partner has just brought in about one hundred mares, and has a large band of Montana cattle on the way. He will take up a ranche somewhere in the vicinity of the forks of Old Man's River. Mr. D. Ford Jones, M.P., has, I believe, taken up a ranche some fifteen miles square in the same vicinity, and his son, Mr. Jonas Jones is out here to manage the affair. The Garnet brothers have taken up a ranche on the forks of Old Man's River, and I believe they already have it well stocked, and there are numerous ranchmen with small bands of from 75 to 500 head of cattle located at various points in what is known as the Bow River country. I have no doubt many of these who are entering on this business without any knowledge of it will lose a great many cattle the first winter, make a grand failure, and then go away and say that this is not a good grazing country, but among the many who are trying it this year for the first time I think there are enough sensible and experienced men who will succeed to establish the reputation of the region as one of the finest grazing sections to be found on this continent. In starting, a man should be very careful not to let his establishment be disproportionate to his means. After canvassing the matter very carefully, I have arrived at the following figures as the probable cost of a fair-sized and moderately complete cattle-ranching outfit:—

Four thousand cattle delivered on ranche, at cost by purchaser, nothing under yearlings counted, \$22.50 per head.....	\$ 90,000
Forty thoroughbred bulls, Hereford and Polled Angus, or Gallo-ways, at \$500 each, delivered on ranche.....	20,000
Forty high grade bulls, delivered on ranche, at \$50 each.....	2,000
One hundred Montana or Broncho horses for herding, at \$50 each..	5,000
Two bull teams of six yokes of oxen each, and one lead waggon and trail to each team.....	2,000
Twelve Mexican saddles, bridles, and lassoes, at \$50 each.....	600
Two sets four-in-hand, plough, driving and cart harness.....	400
Two branding corralls, \$100 each.....	200

Fencing 500 acres for pasture for cows and calves and bulls out of season, 100 of which would be required for cultivation.....	\$2,000
Horse stables, sheds and corralls appertaining to them.....	1,000
Ranche buildings, houses and outhouses.....	1,000
Plant, including two mowers, one reaper, one threshing machine, two horse rakes, two breaking and two sulky ploughs, two stubble ploughs, four iron harrows, one light harrow for seeding, one cultivator, one drill, hoes, shovels, forks, axes and one chest of carpenters' tools.....	2,000
Total.....	\$128,000

It must be remembered, however, that in these figures there is no allowance made for maintenance, which amounts to a very considerable sum. The horses in active service in herding of course require to be fed during the winter, and, from all that I can learn, a very considerable amount of hay should be put up to be fed in cases where it is needed. Cows near calving should certainly be fed hay if the weather happens to be severe, and many a weakly animal might be pulled through by means of two or three light feeds of hay, that would otherwise perish. Hay could be put up here in many places at a cost not exceeding a dollar and a half per ton, and when it can be furnished at such a small outlay it would certainly be bad policy to allow a cow to perish when she could be saved for perhaps three cents, and be worth twenty-five or thirty dollars the following summer. In my estimate of the cost I have mentioned Hereford and Polled Angus, or Galloway bulls. I am quite aware that the great improvements that have been made in the Montana cattle are due to the employment of Shorthorns as herd bulls. I have already stated that I was greatly surprised at the excellent character of these Montana cattle, but just now, perhaps, one of their greatest faults is that their legs are a trifle longer than they ought to be, and I am inclined to think that the short-legged, stout and long-bodied Hereford and Galloway bulls will correct their present tendency to "weediness" much more rapidly and effectively than any other cross that could be made upon them. In addition to this, the general impression prevails here that the Herefords, Polled Angus and Galloways will prove hardier, and do better generally, in this climate than would the more delicately-bred Shorthorns.

THE LEASING SYSTEM.

The system of leasing large ranges to companies and private individuals in this country will, I fear, prove a source of trouble and annoyance, and at the same time be productive of no good results. The price paid by the lessees—a cent an acre—will amount to a mere trifle in the production of revenue, but though these leases are terminable by the Government on two years' notice, the locking-up even for that space of time of such great tracts of really good land in this region cannot be too strongly deprecated. I should like to see cattle and horse ranching encouraged here, as the country is evidently ad-

mirably adapted to these industries, but I think leases should not be granted in such a way that they can be made to retard the settlement of the country. And besides this, is the Government prepared to protect the interests of the lessees of these large ranges? Are they prepared to settle for cattle slaughtered in these rented ranges by the Indians? Are they prepared to deny to settlers the right to allow their cattle to run at large for fear they might trespass on these great ranges for which they receive a rental of one cent per acre? I think the better way would be to sell to every ranchman at a very low figure all the land he would need as a "head-quarters farm" for his cattlerange, the size of the farm to be proportioned to the number of cattle he was prepared to put on the range. Then let the Government sell these ranchmen's head-quarters at intervals far enough apart to afford plenty of room for their cattle. In this way the rancher, though having no special claim upon the surrounding country would have the use of it until it was needed for actual settlement. As settlers would become more plentiful he could herd his cattle farther out on the prairies, where there are both summer and winter ranges of excellent quality, though the absence of timber would stand in the way of the establishment of headquarters there. Local regulations could be made regarding the management of cattle in the region by which the rights of those who brought in valuable bulls would be amply protected. The turning loose of inferior animals should of course be rigidly prohibited, while settlers who allowed their cows to run at large should be compelled either to pay their proportion for the service of the ranchmen's bulls or else themselves turn out one well-bred bull for a certain number of cows or under. Unless something of this kind be done it will be impossible to keep up even the present standard of the cattle brought in from Montana, much less improve it, as should and will be done if proper measures are put into effect to that end. As yet, of course, nothing is very definitely known as to the extent of the region in which cattle ranching will prove a profitable calling, but I think the area is a larger one than is generally supposed. Of course the Chinook winds are an important element in the calculation, and as yet I do not think any one knows just how far the influence of the Chinooks extends. They have been felt as far east as the Cypress Hills, but of course their influence is not strong enough there to thaw the snow off the hillsides and leave the grass exposed for the cattle. Certainly these winds afford an interesting subject for study and speculation, and almost everybody here has a theory of his own as to their origin. Many of these theories are of course very absurd, but as Mr. Dawson ought to be an excellent authority. I will give his views as nearly as I can remember them. The Chinooks, he says, blow off the Pacific Ocean. They are impregnated with moisture when they start, but as they rise to a sufficient altitude to cross the Rocky Mountains, they fall rapidly in temperature as they gain an extraordinary altitude, and with the rapid fall in temperature and corresponding increase in altitude the moisture is precipitated in the form of snow on the mountains, but as soon as they have passed the range and begin to descend they lose their extreme rarity, regain their normal temperature, or, in other words, are the same winds that left the Pacific, less

the moisture which was lost in their passage over the mountains. Mr. Dawson informs me that winds of a similar character blow over portions of the Alps, and that so marked is the work of precipitation and consequent elimination of moisture, that when the wind is blowing off the Mediterranean the high mountain slopes next it are often being visited by cold rains, sleet, or snow, while on the opposite side of the range there is a warm, dry wind, cutting away the snow with wonderful rapidity, and drying and warming the ground. Since I have been in this region I have felt the Chinook a few times but it is observed to a much more marked extent in the cold weather than now. Sometimes during the severest winter weather, when the mercury is always below zero, a bright pink tint will be seen overhanging the Rocky Mountains, and soon after a warm wind will be felt from that direction, that affords such a complete and sudden change that strangers have often been startled into thinking that they were in a draft of hot air from a burning building. The snow will be seen melting in all directions; rivulets will go bounding down the hill sides, and the whole winter landscape will, in a few hours, be transformed as if by magic.

Horse ranching will, I think, ultimately become an industry equal in importance to cattle ranching in this country, though as yet no one has undertaken to make a specialty of it, and those who are now bringing in mares are, I think, not likely to conduct the business in the way I would recommend. Some of the gentlemen who have brought in cattle are bringing small bands of Montana mares that are the result of Broncho and Kyuse (or Cayuse, as it is sometimes spelled), mares crossed with large, cold-blooded sires, such as Percherons and Clydesdales. To attempt to breed good horses from cold-blooded mongrels (and mongrels crossed injudiciously at that) is a manifest absurdity. The result will be nondescript brutes, coarse in the bone, and thin and flabby in muscle. In addition to this, mares that are the result of such an absurd cross will never throw colts at all uniform in character. Some of the colts will take after the Kyuse or Broncho grandam, and others will be thin-bodied, slack-loined, ragged-hipped, and splay-footed, diminutive editions of the heavy draught paternal grandsire. What I would recommend is this, that the intending breeder should go down into Oregon or Washington Territory, and purchase a number of unbroken Kyuse mares, carefully selecting each animal for the purpose. In some portions of Washington Territory unbroken Kyuses can be bought out of the large bands at an average of from \$16 to \$18 per head, but the breeder selecting from band would, of course, want all mares, and he would require none but really good ones, so that the average cost of such animals as he would require would be considerably above this figure. I would prefer Kyuses to Bronchos for various reasons, but the most important of these is, that I think they are more in-bred, and constitute a more distinct breed, and pronounced type, and as a result, would throw produce more uniform in their leading characteristics. Another reason why I prefer the Kyuses is, that they always have feet and legs of rare excellence; and, as a rule, have wonderfully vigorous constitutions, free from taint of every sort. It may be urged that the Kyuses are smaller than the

Bronchos, but the difference is rather in the amount of daylight under them than in the girth, length, or weight of bone and muscle. Besides this, I have noticed that the Indians who have ponies in this country begin to ride them when they are yearlings, and of course this cannot but spoil their growth to a very material extent. I have seen Kyuses from the other side of the mountains that were over fifteen hands high, and remarkably long-bodied and muscular for their height. At all events, the mares are as roomy for breeding as many sixteen-hand animals I have seen, and as they are all broad in the loin, short in the back, and heavy and shapely in the quarters, they could hardly fail to throw stylish and valuable colts if bred to the right sort of horses. For stallions I would use none but thoroughbreds, compact, stout horses, not too tall, but as heavy and muscular as I could find. For a band of three hundred mares I would turn about ten two-year-old thoroughbred colts on the range; and, in addition to these, I would keep two or three well-tried racing stallions that had broken down after proving themselves race-horses on the turf. These latter animals could be picked up at a moderate figure at either the Saratoga or Jerome Park meetings as smallish stallions that have gone down in the back sinews can be bought out of the Southern stables for next to nothing, the owners not caring to incur the expense of taking them South after the races are over. I would breed the best mares to these tried horses, and allow the rest of the herd to run with the ten herd stallions. I have already alluded to those that were turned on the range when two-year-olds. It would be well, however, to set apart a portion of the herd for the propagation of mules, and for these I would secure a thoroughly good Kentucky jack, as mules will, in a few years, be in great demand here. As soon as the construction of the railway in the mountains shall have begun, pack mules will be required in great numbers for the transport of supplies of all sorts, and it will be very strange if the great stretch of the Rocky Mountains that lies adjacent to this country be allowed to remain much longer unprospected. For all sorts of traffic into and through the mountains, either by pleasure-seekers, sportsmen, miners, traders, or railway-builders, mules will be almost indispensable, and it is very certain that any man who has a good supply of pack and other mules here three or four years hence will be in a position to reap a very rich harvest out of them. The colts produced by crossing thoroughbred stallions on good Kyuse mares ought to be the very ideal of a cavalry horse, the demand for which is always particularly strong. The Kyuses themselves, even after they have been abused and ill-treated by the Indians from colthood, make wonderfully stout and clever saddle horses, and if crossed with the thoroughbred in the way I have described, and the colts allowed to reach maturity before being used, the most satisfactory results might confidently be looked for. As a sample of what these ponies can do, I may mention that I have ridden a moderate-sized, unshod four-year-old more than forty miles—over a bad road—in a day, without noticing any symptoms of flagging on his part, while I was no more fatigued than if I had been riding the same length of time in a railway carriage. Of course the length of the journey was nothing to speak of, but when it is remembered

that I weigh 188 pounds, and that at the time I had been for years unaccustomed to the saddle, the reader, if he is a horseman, will see that this fourteen-hand pony must not only have been quite up to my weight, but a remarkably easy-gaited animal. I may add that this pony has been worked hard ever since he was a two-year old, and that he has always picked his living off the prairies, winter and summer.

COST OF A HORSE RANCHE.

The cost of establishing a horse ranche would be much less than that of a cattle ranche, as in the former the proprietor would be quite independent of Chinook winds, as his stock would paw through the snow and reach the grass whether it lay thick or thin on the ground, and of course only a very small quantity of hay need be put up annually. The following figures will I think be found a fair approximate to the probable amount of initial outlay.

Three hundred Kyuse mares delivered on ranche at \$30 each	\$ 9,000
Three choice thoroughbred stallions, delivered on ranche at \$500 each.....	1,500
Ten range stallio (thoroughbred) put in at two years old, \$300...	3,000
One Kentucky Jack.....	1,000
Two three-inch waggons.....	300
Six Mexican saddles, bridles, and lassoes, \$50 each.....	300
Stables, sheds, houses, corralls, &c.....	3,000
Plant, including one mower and reaper combined, one breaking, and one sulky plough, two harrows,, one drill, one cultivator, hoes, shovels, forks, axes, and one chest of carpenters' tools.....	600
One breaking waggon.....	150
Harness.....	300
Blacksmith's forge and tools.....	75
Total.....	\$ 19,225

ANNUAL MAINTENANCE.

Two herders at \$480 per annum.....	\$ 960
Two farm laborers, seven months.....	560
Household expenses, including feeding of men and cook.....	1,200
Other supplies and incidentals.....	500

Total annual outlay..... \$ 3,220

This does not include the salary of a manager.

CHAPTER. XXXII.

FROM FORT CALGARY TO EDMONTON—SUMMER FROSTS UPON THE PLAINS—A CURIOUS LEDGE, QUERELY BROUGHT, INHABITED BY MANY BIRDS—FUTURE OF CALGARY—A DRIVE OF 1,300 MILES YET TO BE MADE—NATURE OF THE COUNTRY ON THE ROUTE—HORSE THIEVES ABOUT CALGARY—A SUNSET ON THE PRAIRIES—LAKES SWARMING WITH DUCKS AND GESE—A STORM ON THE PLAINS.

CALGARY, Oct. 4.—Since the 30th of September, the last date in my journal, I have been waiting for favourable weather and making the necessary preparations for the long drive before me. For the past two days I have been the guest of Corporal Wilson, who is now in charge of this outpost, and to whom I am indebted for many kindnesses. While on this subject, I should also acknowledge the courtesy with which I have been treated by Col. Irvine, the very efficient Commissioner of the Mounted Police, and also the many kindnesses of Capt. Cotton, Superintendent and Adjutant; and Major Crozier, Superintendent; and Mr. Dowling, Inspector and Quarter-Master, at Fort McLeod, all of whom have done everything they could, consistent with their official positions, to make my stay in this part of the country a pleasant one, and to afford me facilities for obtaining information. During the time my outfit remained in Calgary, I am sorry to say that one of my favourite ponies, "Touchwood," developed a severe attack of mange, and though this disease is quite curable, the horse under treatment requires careful attention and rest, and therefore, I knew it would be out of the question to take him along. Under the circumstances, I concluded to make the best of my ill luck, and by paying a moderate amount of difference, I secured in his place a very staunch little bay piebald gelding (Jim), that drives well with Blanche, and promises to make an excellent substitute for Touchwood. I also purchased a pretty little Pinto, two-year-old filly, to take along as a spare pony, in case any of the other four should go amiss during the long and lonely journey before me. Indeed, I have done my best to provide against any emergencies that may arise on the trip, and as I have had my waggon thoroughly overhauled, I hope to be able to push through in safety, though of course it is impossible to make sure of anything like a speedy journey at this season of the year. I am quite aware that I am liable to be snowed in on the prairie for days together, and there are all sorts of contingencies that may arise to detain me, but as I am very desirous to make my tour of inspection as complete as possible, I feel that I cannot afford to return without seeing Edmonton, one of the most distant, and one of the most important, if not indeed the most important of the settlements of the North-West. Were it not that the season is so far advanced, I should have visited Morleyville (named after the late celebrated Morley Punshon, D. D.;) but as the visit

would detain me at least three days, I decided that I could not afford to spare the time.

On Monday next (October 10th), Mr. Stimson, of the Rocky Mountain Live Stock Company, and Mr. McHugh, of the Indian Supply Farm, leave here in an open boat bound for Winnipeg. They will run down Bow River to where it unites with the Belly River and forms the South Saskatchewan, and thence by the latter stream to a point near Prince Albert, whence they expect to secure transport overland to Winnipeg. I was invited to join them, and should have been happy to do so, as I expect they will make a quick and pleasant voyage, but on reflection I concluded that the purpose of my mission to this country would be much better served by travelling overland *via* Edmonton. The Canada Pacific Railway people here are extremely reticent if, indeed, they have anything worth communicating, but the general impression now is that the railway will be built through the Bow River Pass, though as nearly as I can learn the surveying parties in this region have accomplished very little this summer. Should the Bow River Pass be definitely settled upon, it is not unlikely that Calgary may become of very considerable importance. There is a beautiful town site here on the angle enclosed by Bow River and the Elbow, and the general belief is that steamers could run from Grand Rapids on the Great Saskatchewan all the way up to the present location of Fort Calgary. Should this prove true, this can hardly fail to become an important distributing point during the construction of the mountain section of the Canada Pacific Railway, and even if supplies should continue to come in by way of Fort Benton it is doubtful if the heavy bull trains and mule trains could, with safety, go north of this point, as beyond here, I am told, the trails are too soft to admit of the passage of these enormously heavy waggons that are used in freighting. To-morrow, though the weather now looks very unpromising, I have decided to make a start as the season is now becoming so far advanced that every day's delay here is a serious matter when I reflect that I have a drive of 1,300 miles before me through an almost uninhabited wilderness where one heavy snow storm might place me in a situation which I cannot but shudder to contemplate.

IN CAMP *en route* from Fort Calgary to Edmonton, October 5.—There is little to record of my journeyings to-day. It was nearly two o'clock when I left Calgary and forded Bow River to take the Edmonton trail. The weather though threatening this morning has been very pleasant this afternoon, and I am in hopes that the fine weather which many have been prophesying for this month is at last at hand. While we were still within three miles of Calgary, we drove through a large herd of cattle belonging to the Cochrane ranche. Most of them were very fine-looking animals, but many of them show the effects of hard driving from Montana to such an extent that many of the settlers here are prophesying that they will not live through the winter. The eighteen miles of prairie which we have traversed in an almost due northerly direction to-day has the appearance of very choice grazing land. The soil is a rich black loam, and the sole product a clean free growing buffalo

grass, the total absence of everything in the shape of wolf willows, wild rose bushes or brush of any kind indicates that the snow does not lie in this section of the prairie during the winter and consequently indicates that it would make an excellent range for cattle. It is only fairly watered by a little stream called "Nose Creek," but any deficiencies in that respect could doubtless be remedied by the sinking of a few artesian wells. We are still in sight of the snow-capped Rocky Mountains and some of the views we have enjoyed this afternoon have been remarkably fine. Our camp to-night is a rather dreary one in the lee of a great, bare prairie wave, and close upon the bank of Nose Creek, while the ponies are huddled into a little group making a hearty meal on the rich, fresh grass and wild pea-vine growing in the rank bottoms. This is a bright moonlight night, and already the frost is decidedly keen, and our only fire is of buffalo chips, which make anything but a cheerful camp fire, though they answer moderately well for cooking where wood is not obtainable. We are so near Calgary that I am afraid of the horse thieves that for some weeks have been infesting that region, but with the precautions I have taken I think I shall at least have the satisfaction of firing a shot or two at the thieves should they undertake to capture the ponies. I have been fortunate enough to fall in with a young Cree half-breed who has undertaken to carry a letter for Mr. McDonald from Calgary to Edmonton and bring the answer back for \$40. He is riding a stout Kyuse stallion and has promised to travel in company with us as long as our pace proves fast enough to suit him. This afternoon I was riding his stallion the greater part of the time, allowing him to ride in the waggon and chat with Peter. As we shall be off at five in the morning and drive ten miles before breakfast, it is now bed-time. My little tent on the great pampas is lonely enough to-night, and the only sound that breaks the almost death-like stillness is the heavy breathing of the two sleeping half-breeds and the soft far-off muffled clinking of Punch's bell, that assures me that he and the rest of the band are still feeding in the rich tall grass in the creek bottoms.

IN CAMP, SARVISBERY CREEK, 56 MILES FROM CALGARY, en route to Edmonton, October 6.—The weather has been all that could be wished for to-day, and there is yet but little to complain of as far as the roads are concerned. We were up before five o'clock and on the trail before six, John Warren taking my place in the waggon, and I riding his stallion and herding the spare ponies along. We reached Macpherson's coulie, ten miles further on our way, in about two hours, and halted for breakfast, Peter and Warren riding off nearly a mile to cut a little light brush with which to make a fire. By dinner time we had made another eighteen miles, and after dinner we came ten miles further on, which I estimate at fully 56 miles from Calgary. There has been no material change in the character of the country so far. The soil is still a rich black loam, and the product a vigorous growth of clean buffalo grass on the benches, and blue joint and other good lowland grasses, liberally mixed with pea-vine in the bottoms. Here and there I have noticed slight traces of alkali along the trail to-day, but nowhere has it shown itself strong enough to be in the slightest degree objectionable. Excepting in the bottoms

I have seen nothing but clean, strong grass to-day, and the total absence of all sorts of brush and bushes beyond a very scanty growth in some of the coulees indicates that we are still in a region where the snow does not lie to any great depth even in winter. I imagine, however, that this region is sometimes visited with summer frosts, as Warren tells me, an ex-policeman once perished in this same valley where we are camped, in the month of June. Little scraps of information of this kind are not very encouraging to me when I reflect that it is now getting on well into October, and that I have to drive or ride nearly the whole breadth of the great plains lying between Winnipeg and the Rocky Mountains even after I shall have reached Edmonton.

A CURIOSITY OF THE PLAINS.

While camp and supper were being prepared to-night I took my gun and strolled down the creek eastwards in search of game. Ducks were very scarce, but I saw several minks swimming in the middle of the stream, some of which I could have shot very easily, but as my cartridges are loaded with swan shot, and both barrels of the gun full choke bored, I allowed the little fellows to escape as I knew that killing them with such a weapon would totally destroy the skins. As I was about to return to camp, however, I noticed what appeared to be a curious collection of boulders upon the prairie bluff fully 75 or 100 feet above the bed of the creek. I climbed up to the spot and found one of the strangest of natural curiosities that I ever beheld. The more nearly I approached the strange object the more striking was its resemblance to a section of some old ruined castle. What now remained of it above ground, had once been a solid ledge of finely stratified and very soft and friable sandstone, of about the same colour as that exported in large quantities from Cleveland, Ohio. The ledge was about 100 feet in length and from 25 to 30 feet high from the base though it stood in a large saucer-like cavity, which, like a buffalo wallow, was excavated considerably below the level of the surrounding prairie. The thickness of the ledge had originally been about 15 feet, but it had the appearance of having been extensively water-worn, smooth cavities and passages having been worn out in all directions and in the most curious manner. The strange freaks of the water currents, or whatever may have been the force that cut the ledge into its present shape had worn numerous channels through the rock and left the peaks or rounded turrets standing, and nine of these were covered with huge caps like coping stones projecting considerably over the shaft or body of the turret. There were rude loopholes, windows and winding passages, as if tortuous stairways with the wood-work burned or rotted away had been partially exposed by the crumbling down of sections of the outer walls. There were curious little niches in the outer walls, and deep rounded caves, in which the birds had built curious shaped nests of mud, while the fine well-defined stratification of the soft drab sandstone made a miniature mimicry of masonry, well calculated to assist the illusion, and make this singular freak of nature more closely resemble the ruins of man's handiwork. This curious rock is evidently a great resort for birds, and it is quite possible that they may have cut the fan-

tastically shaped cavities in it, as it is extremely soft and crumbles away readily under the hand.

A SUNSET ON THE PRAIRIES.

There was a glorious sunset to-night, but an ominously bright spot in the soft amber clouds above it promised badly for the weather to come. To-night I sat outside the tent in the keen frosty air till the last rays of daylight had faded from the western sky, and the cold silvery moonlight glistening on the dew-laden withered grass made our ruddy little camp-fire in the broad white valley look like a great ruby dropped upon a broad sheet of snow. Then I turned into the tent to write up my journal.

IN CAMP, SALT LAKE, 97 MILES FROM CALGARY, *en route* to Edmonton, October 7.—This morning we were up and out of the valley before sunrise, but just as I was cantering over the frosty yellow grass I saw the snow-clad peaks of the Rocky Mountains flushed to a bright rose colour, and then the sun's ruddy disc burst through the gilded prairie level away to the eastward, the little cloud fragments floating in the amber zone above it were lighted up like isles of fire, and the festoons of the dark leaden cloud curtain that hung still higher in the sky were fringed with deep bright crimson. In ten minutes the sun was under a cloud, another promise of bad weather, but it was soon shining again, and we had pleasant weather for the rest of the forenoon. For an hour or two we were still travelling through clean rich prairie grass and then wolf willows, wild rose bushes and other small shrubs began to make their appearance, and soon after grey willows and small timber were seen in the northern horizon. Here too we came to a broader leaved grass mixed with wild pea vine and weeds of various sorts, and what is generally recognised as the cattle grazing region had come to an end. As I have already stated, it is adopted as a rule by those who know the prairie that the snow lies wherever these small bushes are found, and as a consequence cattle ranchers are apt to look for smooth prairie when in search of winter ranges.

A little before noon we reached a clump of grey willows and found ourselves fairly in the timber. In this immediate vicinity there are large spruce trees known to freighters and *voyageurs* as "lone pine." It is here that they begin to "pack" wood on their way south, usually taking enough to last them to Calgary, unless they are travelling very light, in which case they depend partially on the sparse growth of stunted willows to be found along the banks of Sarvisberry Creek for a supplementary supply.

After luncheon we were driving through a fine, rich-looking, rolling prairie, abounding in little clumps or "bluffs" of poplar and grey willow, while occasionally the dark green of the spruce would be seen mingling with the bright yellow of the frost-nipped poplars. This afternoon the weather has been unpleasant and cold, with some rain and occasional flurries of snow, and everything indicates that there is an ugly storm of cold rain or perhaps snow close at hand. Though we are now nearly 100 miles north of Calgary I have not seen any but really good land. To-night we are camped in a little bushy nook close between two hills that overlook an alkali lake known as

Salt Lake. Warren says that we are now not more than five miles from Red Deer River, and about fifteen miles from the ford where we have to cross. This is a dreary-looking, dismal night. Beyond the ruddy glare of our camp fire on the bushes of grey willow that rise in a thick wall on either side of us, everything is wrapped in pitchy darkness. The lake seems fairly alive with geese and ducks, that keep up an almost incessant cackling and quacking, as though they were greatly disturbed by our presence in the neighbourhood, while at intervals we can hear the whizzing of their wings as flock after flock sweeps swiftly over our camp fire, as if they were determined to find out what we were and why we had come among them. I must admit that to-night I am beginning to tire of this long stretch of camp life and incessant travelling. I have been travelling almost without intermission since the 21st of July, and in camp since the 8th of August, besides several nights in camp prior to the last-mentioned date. Camping out with a party of friends in beautiful weather, and where one can run into a first-class hotel for shelter whenever a shower comes up, is a very different thing from travelling through an almost uninhabited country with a solitary half-breed attendant, a small tent, a waggon, a little band of ponies, and an ever-present and sometimes oppressive consciousness that over a thousand miles of this lonesome travelling still lies between me and "civilization," though the season is already far advanced, and bad weather and bad roads are only what may reasonably be expected.

THE STORM BREAKS.

As I close my journal I can hear the winds moaning and howling over the hills above us, and between the fitful gusts come the rain and sleet splashing and rattling upon my little tent. The dreaded storm has come at last and that in right good earnest.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ON THE TRAIL FROM FORT. CALGARY TO EDMONTON—DAY AFTER DAY OF BLINDING STORMS—A GLIMPSE OF INDIAN HOME LIFE AND HOSPITALITY—A LONELY CAMP IN THE WILDERNESS—THE HUNTER'S RETURN—A TEA DANCE AND HOW THE GUESTS WERE INVITED—DISMAL PROSPECTS.

IN CAMP, BLIND MAN'S RIVER, 122 MILES FROM CALGARY, en route to Edmonton, October 8.—This has been a dreary, dismal day, and though we started early and drove hard till nearly dark, we have only made about twenty-five miles. When we were awakened this morning the storm was still howling outside and the snow was banked up about the tent on every side. After consulting with Pétér, I decided that it would be better to try and push on

as my supplies were not sufficiently extensive to make it safe to remain longer in our camp than was absolutely necessary. With Blanche and Jim in harness, the two half-breeds jogged along at a good pace considering the miserable condition of the trail, while mounted on Warren's piebald roan stallion, the snow and sleet beating savagely in my face, and my sou'wester suit frozen almost as stiff as a suit of sheet-iron armour, I jogged along behind, keeping the spare horses in motion. In due time we reached the prairie bluff overlooking the valley of Red Deer River, and I thought under what different circumstances and in what a widely different sort of country I had first looked down into the valley of that famous stream only one month and one day from to-day. Then I thought it one of the brightest and loveliest bits of autumnal colouring I had ever beheld, and one of the most charming scenes on the long Battleford and Calgary trail. Then there was no lack of companionship, bright skies, and lovely autumn weather. Now the scene is wondrously changed. The Calgary and Edmonton trail strikes Red Deer River at a point where the prairie is so overgrown with clumps of small timber and bushes that its distinctive character is almost lost. Instead of the rich, bright green of the grey poplar, mingling with the first gay tints of early autumn, the sombre, black green spruces reared their sharp, spine-like cones among wreaths and drifts of new fallen snow, and contrasted with the sere foliage that had felt a wintry frost and the dark purplish brown of the leafless grey willows. Instead of a mellow autumn sky, dull leaden storm-clouds hang thick and dark on every side, and instead of the soft fresh breezes whistling over the limitless pampas I felt upon my cheek the cold, cutting breath of a blinding snow-storm from the north.

In time we reached the ford, and though the river is wide and swift at this point, we had no difficulty in crossing, as the water scarcely came up to the ponies' girths.

After camping for noon on the bottoms beyond the ford, we drove on to Blind Man's River, and crossing a narrow but deep and rocky ford, we reached our present camp. The strip of land some ten miles wide lying between the crossings of Red Deer and Blind Man's Rivers is somewhat hilly, and for the most part, thickly wooded, grey willow and poplar being the prevailing timber, though occasionally a dark wall of narrow-based, sharp-coned spruces seen standing on a hill-side, relieved with the lemon gold of frost-nipped poplars. I have been told that near the mountains there are some choice ranges for cattle in and about the valley of the Red Deer, but whatever may be the character of the country further towards its source, it is very certain that the valley of this stream where it is crossed by the Calgary and Edmonton trail is quite unsuitable for the purpose. The region is, I think, a cold one, in which the snows fall early and lie deep all winter, and there is so much timber that cows would be very apt to starve to death in it for the sake of the shelter afforded by it rather than venture out into the more open prairie during the prevalence of cold, stormy weather.

To-night we have a roaring fire at the door of the tent, and I am writing by the fire-light in preference to further trenching on my rather slender

store of candles. The storm is moaning and howling through the spruces and poplars overhead and up the hill behind our camp, and the snow is falling so fast that it is already banked up in little heaps about the camp, while as often as a storm gust sweeps down upon us, a little avalanche of snow from the heavily laden branches falls hissing upon our bright, crackling camp-fire. The ponies have quit feeding, and are huddled together in a little disconsolate group in the shelter of some thick-growing spruces close to the fire. The poor brutes are half-coated with ice, and I am sorry to say I have no grain to give them, as I was only able to secure a very limited supply at Calgary, which was exhausted some time since. Indeed, the situation is a serious one. Some of my ponies are now almost unfit for service, and even the best of them are shrinking terribly from hard work and lack of feed. My rations are rather light, and I am not at all sure that they will last till I get to Edmonton. If the roads continue as bad as they are, or become worse, as I begin to fear they may, I shall be in a miserable plight by the time I reach Edmonton, to say nothing of the long south-easterly journey that will still lie before me after I reach that point.

FIFTEEN MILE COULEE, 138 MILES FROM CALGARY, en route to Edmonton, Oct. 9.—Again our camp was made in a raging snow storm, and still the storm gusts are breaking fiercely over us with unabated fury. The snow has been falling all day, and the travelling has been so heavy that we have only made fifteen miles. The snow collects in great masses in the ponies' feet, and the mud and snow gather in great ridges on the waggon wheels, so that anything but the slowest progress is impossible. To-day we have been travelling through a beautiful rolling prairie, fairly wooded and considerably overgrown with brush, about two feet high. It has the appearance of good agricultural land, but the grass is far from being clean enough for cattle ranching. Poplar grows in the bluffs to a fair size, and small-sized spruce trees are abundant. To-night, while the half-breeds were making camp in a thicket, I ventured out into the storm, and after a great deal of tramping I managed to kill a small partridge (the first I have seen since leaving the seven-mile portage below Eagle Lake), which, with five ducks killed this morning at Blind Man's River, will do something toward helping to eke out our supplies. To-night is intensely cold, and my fingers are chilled and numb as I write.

INDIAN VILLAGE, BEAR HILLS, 153 MILES FROM CALGARY, en route to Edmonton, October 10.—This morning when we turned out the storm was still raging, but to remain longer in camp was quite out of the question, as our rations would not admit of any unnecessary delay, so we decided to push on as rapidly as possible. During the forenoon the sun struggled feebly through the storm clouds and I hoped the storm was at an end. By noon all hope of this kind had vanished again, as the clouds thickened and the storm continued as fiercely as ever. The country was good as far as Battle River, a distance of about nine miles, when one of those annoyances incident to travelling with Kyuses overtook me.

Jim and Blanche were afraid of the ford, and I rode on, breaking the ice at the edge of the river and riding through ahead of them, Punch and little Olivette following without any hesitation. Then came the team and the wagon, but Sandy declined to follow, preferring to look out a crossing for himself. Thinking he would come along when he got ready, I rode on and left him, but by the time we had gone a quarter of a mile from the ford I decided to ride back and see what had become of the loiterer. Seeing nothing of him at the ford I re-crossed the river and followed it for nearly a mile upstream, when I found Master Sandy feeding quietly on the bank. I drove him back to the ford, and managed to get him to the water's edge without much difficulty, but just as I was expecting to see him take the water he bolted off, and clambering up the steep bank he ran off again; I wheeled the stallion about and gave chase over the rough ground at full gallop, but he ran nearly half a mile down stream before I was able to head him off, and then I was only able to accomplish it by dashing at break-neck speed over half-frozen muskegs and through tangled clumps of grey willows that tore and scratched my face as I swept through them. Again and again I brought the brute to the ford, but as often he would break away and go racing up or down the stream. Once or twice he took the back trail for Calgary, but as this was in comparatively open country I could make the stallion head him off without much difficulty. At last, however, the horse I was riding became tired, and I re-crossed the ford and was going on to camp for a fresh one when I met Peter, who, alarmed at my long absence, was already on the way with another horse. Between the two of us we managed to catch the runaway and bring him along to camp.

After crossing Battle River I found that the country deteriorated considerably in character, and during nearly the whole of this afternoon we have been travelling through half-frozen muskegs and swamps, where the horses are continually breaking ice and ploughing through mud and water that often comes up to their girths. Indeed this whole region appears to be one vast swamp, with here and there a narrow ridge of good land traversing from east to west. In the middle of the afternoon Sandy gave out, and I had to have Jim and Blanche reharnessed to finish the day's drive. This is the first time one of my ponies has "played out," and I cannot but regard it as an ill omen when I think of the long severe journey that lies before me. Just before dark we reached the Bear Hills Indian village, which is governed by three Cree chiefs, who are said to be brothers. Their names are "Sampson," "Bobtail," and "Ermine Skin." Some of the people live in little log huts, and some in "tepees." We drove up to the best looking of the log huts (which is occupied by Ermine Skin and his son-in-law) and asked permission to spread our blankets there for the night, a privilege that was cheerfully accorded to us. Our quarters to-night are not at all luxurious, but on a cold, stormy night like this, anything is preferable to sleeping out in my little tent. The house is a little, low, flat-roofed shanty, built of poplar poles, and plastered with mud. It consists of only one room, about twelve by sixteen feet, with a floor of roughly hewn poplar poles. It has one door and

two windows. The door consists of a wooden frame with a raw buffalo hide stretched upon it, and the windows are simply small holes in the walls covered with thin, grey cotton. Opposite the door is a small mud fire-place in which a cheerful fire is burning, and in one corner is a low bed which, as nearly as I can make out, is simply a mass of old rags and such skins as have no commercial value. When we entered the house there were two women sitting on the floor (there are no chairs, stools, nor benches in the hut) by the fire, one considerably past the prime of life, Mrs. Ermine Skin, and another, some twenty-five years old, her married daughter. There were several small children about the hut, who scampered over to the side in which the heap of rags and skins, dignified by the name of bed, lay, and in a few seconds the east side of the hut was cleared for our occupancy. To say that this little mud shanty was destitute of furniture but faintly expresses the condition of absolute squalor that prevailed inside of it. There were no cupboards nor even shelves in it, and a few pegs in the wall and two or three smoke browned poles suspended from the roof to support a few half dried muskrat skins made up, with the dirty heap that I have already alluded to as a "bed," the total contents of the miserable hovel.

Shortly after our arrival Ermine Skin's son-in-law came in after having spent the afternoon in hunting. He was a sorry looking spectacle as he entered. His moccasins were soaking wet, though the night is bitterly cold, and his blanket was wrapped around him from his head to his heels, so that as his dark, pinched, smoky-looking face protruded from between its folds he forcibly suggested to me the idea of a re-animated mummy. He lowered the blanket to his shoulders and shook the snow out of his long, jet black hair, which, when thus turned loose, hung down to his waist. Then, after standing his single-barrelled Hudson Bay gun in a corner by the fireplace, he dropped a partridge from under his blanket. His wife and the children appeared particularly pleased at this, and as the latter were about to turn away with it he let fall a prairie chicken. Then even his mother-in-law was betrayed into an expression of approval, and as soon as they had recovered from their ecstasies he dropped another partridge, which of course called for fresh exclamations of astonishment and delight. Then followed another chicken, and then another partridge, and so on till he had a pile of some eight or nine birds on the floor, for he had evidently had a wonderfully lucky afternoon. As soon as the game had been handed over to the children the hunter sat down on the bed, with his feet to the fire, while his wife removed his wet moccasins, after which she brought him his pipe and tobacco, and then the red man consoled himself for his hard afternoon's work with a long smoke. By the time he had finished his smoke the children had skinned (not plucked) the game, and the whole of it was put into a pot, which was hung over the fire to boil. Some potatoes were boiled in the same pot at the same time, and the whole was soon ready and served out, not only to the family, but to several friends who had been notified of our host's good luck. Ermine Skin himself had gone to Edmonton, and his son-in-law, his wife, and his married daughter played the host and hostesses. The stew, into which they had put

neither pepper nor salt, was ladled out of the pot into tin plates which had been shaken out of a bag hitherto concealed somewhere about that mysterious bed, and each one, even the smallest child in the house, was very liberally helped. The man of the house had previously taken supper with Peter and Johnny Warren, but though he had eaten heartily it did not appear to have in any way impaired his appetite for this grand family meal, and he fell to feeding himself with his fingers as ravenously as any of the party.

A TEA DANCE.

Not long after supper, and after I had begun writing my journal, Johnny Warren dipped a cupful of tea out of his ration-bag and gave it to the lady of the house, and a few minutes later I was informed that they purposed having a tea dance if I had no objection. Of course, I had no objection, and accordingly a large sheet-iron kettle was brought in from out of doors, filled with water, and hung over the fire. In due time the tea was made, but long before this our host's grandmother had come in from a neighbouring teepee and was duly installed as mistress of ceremonies. As soon as the kettle had been lifted off the fire this energetic old lady commenced to extend the invitations to the dance, but, of course she did not waste any perfumed stationery or fancy printing in the task assigned her, though her manner of performing it was unique and original. She merely went outside the hovel and shouted in Cree the names of the invited guests, the nature of the party to which they were being invited, and that the "liquor" was ready. In a few minutes the shanty was half filled with squaws young and old, who squatted upon the floor and began drinking the tea, and laughing and jabbering Cree in the most energetic manner. When they had drunk about two cups each the old mistress of ceremonies got up and, after bowing very profoundly to Johnny, Peter and myself, began to sing and dance in the usual Indian fashion. The dancing and singing were very much like all other Indian dances that I have seen except that there were no male singers or dancers. They had a "tea dance," a "buffalo dance" (in which the squaws wore different articles of Ermine Skin's hunting accoutrements), and then there was a "gift dance," in which the old mistress of ceremonies said she was giving her grandson a horse. Of course this was pure fiction, but such things are very often done at Indian festivities. Indeed, I have known of red men who had but one pony giving him away in one of these dances. They are exceedingly generous with one another, and a chief is expected to give to any of his own band any piece of property he has, which is particularly admired. The dancing and singing was kept up till I was heartily sick of it, and until two large kettles of tea had been drank, and then the company broke up as suddenly as it had assembled.

The weather is still very cold and stormy to-night, and the outlook is really a most disheartening one. My ponies are shrinking rapidly from hard work and want of food, one of them, "Sandy," being already nearly or quite useless. I hear nothing but the most discouraging accounts of the trail between here and Edmonton. To-morrow I hope to reach the Indian Instructor's farm, which is some twenty miles farther along the trail.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MORE STORMY WEATHER ENCOUNTERED—BEAR HILLS INDIAN FARM—ARRIVAL AT EDMONTON—ST. ALBERT MISSION—THE BLACK MUD RIVER—A GREAT SWAMP OF BLACK EARTH—WRETCHED CHARACTER OF THE TRAIL TO EDMONTON.

IN CAMP, INDIAN FARM, BEAR HILLS, 173 MILES FROM CALGARY, *en route* to Edmonton, October 11.—This morning the weather was as cold and stormy as ever, and my ponies had wandered off in search of better forage, so that it was eleven o'clock before we were on our way again. We have made twenty miles to-day over the worst trail we have yet found. The country appears to be one vast swamp, with only here and there a narrow ridge of low upland running through it. Judging from the luxuriant growth of coarse grass and small shrubbery (mostly grey willow) I should suppose the land to be very rich and productive, but I cannot quite understand how such an immense swamp can be made useful for many years to come unless something gigantic in the way of drainage can be devised and put into effect for its benefit. I had heard some pretty strong stories about the character of the trails approaching Edmonton, but the half had not been told. There may be good land about Edmonton, but if the other approaches to it are as bad as this one any intending settler would do well to consider the matter carefully before attempting to make his way through these frightful morasses as long as there is plenty of good land easy of access in the vicinity of Battleford, Prince Albert, Qu'Appelle, Calgary, Fort McLeod, and in fact throughout the whole of this vast territory. To-day the trail was so bad that I was obliged to use my best team (Blanche and Jim) for the whole distance. Often for nearly a hundred yards they would have to break the ice as they went, and wade through muddy sloughs with the water up to their girths. Again and again have I seen them struggle out of the water and get quite up on the ice and then stand quietly till it gave way beneath them and let them down into the cold water and mud. At other places where the ice was not so strong they would rear up and break their way through it with their fore feet. To-night they are half covered with ice and frozen mud, all in all they present as disconsolate a picture as I ever beheld. At this rate I shall never be able to make my way back to civilization without fresh ponies, and the sooner I supply myself with one or two the better, though owing to the prevalence of hoof evil it will be difficult to secure good ones, except at exorbitant rates.

The Bear Hills Indian Farm is certainly not favourably located for an exceptionally wet and backward season such as the present one has been. The land, though rich, is much too cold and low lying. Mr. Lucas, who was appointed Instructor for the Bear Hills Indian Reserve, is at present absent on a long leave, and Mr. John Lee, an old frontiersman, is the acting Instructor, assisted by Mr. James Mowat, formerly Acting Indian Agent at Edmonton.

There are on the farm sixty-three acres under cultivation, and had it not been for the present unseasonable weather the results of this season's operations would in all probability have been very satisfactory. As it is, the root crop promises well, but it is very doubtful if much of it will be stored in good order, as the most of it is still in the ground, which is already frozen to a considerable depth. Mr. Lee estimates that there will be half an average crop of wheat and oats, but at present the cut barley is lying under the snow. He had twenty-one acres sown in wheat, about five acres in barley, and twelve acres in oats. He thinks that in spite of the cold wet season, which prevented the grain from ripening properly, the wheat will yield about fifteen, and the oats thirty bushels to the acre.

Some of the Indians on the reserve (notably Ermine Skin) are determined to become farmers, but hitherto they have been at a disadvantage owing to the impossibility of getting seed upon the spot in proper time; but it is to be hoped that they will be furnished more promptly next season.

IN CAMP, 193 MILES FROM CALGARY, *en route* to Edmonton, October 13.—Yesterday I waited at the Indian Instructor's farm for better weather, and this morning I had the satisfaction of seeing bright sunshine again, so that the snow began to disappear rapidly. Having bought a fresh pony (a neat little bay called Rowdy), I was off in good season this morning, expecting very bad roads, and in this I was not in any way disappointed. Mile after mile the horses had to break their way through the ice and haul the waggon through the deep water and soft mud that lay beneath it. The weather was pleasanter, however, and our camp to-night would be cheerful enough were it not for the dreary prospect ahead of us. The character of the country grows steadily worse as we travel northward, and to-day we have been plunging through one vast morass utterly worthless for agricultural purposes, unless it could be thoroughly drained.

IN CAMP, 208 MILES FROM CALGARY, *en route* to Edmonton, October 14.—The trail has been worse than ever to-day, and despite the short distance covered, this has been a very hard day's drive. The weather is very cold and unpleasant, though but little snow is falling. I am now about five miles south of Edmonton, and it is to be hoped that the worst of the trail has been passed. To-day at noon we crossed the Black Mud River, which I was told was very bad. I took off all my heavy clothing, and clad in the lightest of summer costumes (though the day was bitterly cold) mounted Punch, drove the loose ponies into the dark, sluggish-looking stream, and immediately followed to keep them from turning back, supposing, of course, that they would have to swim across. In this I was agreeably disappointed, as they managed to find footing all the way across and clamber safely up the north bank. As the stream was quite fordable, Peter drove in with the waggon, and Blanche and Jim brought their load up the steep north bank without ever faltering.

The country through which we have followed the trail to-day is simply one great swamp of black earth, except in the case of the last few miles, where it consists of water-soaked uplands extremely rich. Good crops could doubtless be raised here in a dry season, but the present summer has been very wet

and cold, and the few fields I have seen, look as though they had not yielded more than half a crop this year.

This horrible trail, bad weather, and frozen forage is making sorry spectacles of my ponies; but as I am now very near what is spoken of as one of the best grain-growing regions in the North-West, I trust I shall be able to buy oats or barley for them without much difficulty; and whether I can or not I shall have to lie over for a day or two for the purpose of seeing the place and giving the horses a short rest. "Rowdy," the pony I bought at the Indian farm, has turned out to be an excellent little animal, and as he is fresh and in good condition I trust he will be a great help to me in getting through the long journey that still lies before me.

EDMONTON, October 18th.—I reached here, or rather a point opposite here, on the south side of the Saskatchewan, early on the forenoon of the 15th instant, and as soon as I could make camp and see that the horses were turned out in fairly good winter forage, I made my way to the ferry, and crossing in a small boat through large quantities of floating ice, reached this side of the river about noon. Though away to the south of the Saskatchewan the land is low and marshy for many miles around, the Hudson's Bay fort and the little town of Edmonton are both built on a high bluff overlooking the river, and some 150 feet above it. The fort consists of a large wooden stockade, enclosing a square of about an acre and a half with a large bastion at each corner. Within the enclosure is a well, a store, a post office, a number of storehouses, and two small rows of houses for the employees. This has long been an important trading post for the Hudson Bay Company, and in former times it was the scene of many bloody skirmishes between the Crees on one side and the Blackfeet or Sarcees on the other. Indeed, there is scarcely a block of a hundred acres anywhere in this vicinity that has not within the last thirty years been stained with the blood of murdered Indians. About three-quarters of a mile down the river a little village is rapidly springing up, and could the settlers secure satisfactory titles to their land, town lots would now be selling at a good figure. As yet, however, there has been no Government survey of the land, and the result is that everybody is afraid he may be putting buildings on his neighbour's property. There are several stores, well stocked, three steam grist and saw mills, and Canada Methodist and Episcopal Churches. It would be difficult to estimate the white and half-breed population of Edmonton proper, as the general term Edmonton is applied to the whole settlement, or succession of settlements, along the North Saskatchewan from the mission of St. Albert on Sturgeon River, about nine miles north-west of the Fort, to Fort Saskatchewan, some twenty miles down the river.

ST. ALBERT.

On Saturday afternoon (the day of my arrival here), through the kindness of Mr. Lealie Wood, the Postmaster here, I was furnished with a horse and buckboard to drive out to the St. Albert mission. The country between the fort and the mission is a beautiful agricultural region, pretty well-filled with

settlers who appear to be doing well, except of course, that the cold, backward season and early winter has caught some of them in an unlucky plight with their harvesting. Most of them had their root crops frozen in the ground, and unless the weather moderates they will have difficulty in saving them. To judge from the number of immense grain stacks near their houses I should suppose that their farms had been very productive during the past season. Of course some of the crops have been harvested before they were quite mature, but I saw enough to convince me of the extraordinary fertility of the land, though this season the results may, and doubtless will, prove very unsatisfactory. The land is not, strictly speaking, prairie, though there are many small stretches that are absolutely treeless, but at the same time there is enough of small timber to make the view from almost any point very limited. The timber is mostly poplar and grey willow, and growing as it does, to only a small size, the clearing up of a farm among these little "bluffs" is an easy and inexpensive operation.

It was nearly dark and very cold when I found the trail leading down a thickly-wooded hill into the valley of Sturgeon River, while on the crest of the opposite slope beyond the river rose the mission buildings, against a dark background of cold leaden sky. Crossing a long wooden bridge, erected and kept in order by the St. Albert Mission, I soon found myself at the door of the Bishop's palace, to which I was very cordially welcomed by Père Le Duc, and thoroughly glad I was to accept his hospitality for the night. During the evening I had time to look about the place, and collect some information about the mission and the work that is being accomplished by it.

The St. Albert Mission was established by Père La Combe in 1858. At that time there was no settlement here or anything resembling it, only a camping place for Indians marking the spot. At this time one small log house was built, and this constituted the only structure belonging to the mission. Two years later the house was built for the Sisters, which is still occupied by them. This is a large building 50 feet by 30, and two stories high. In 1867 Père La Combe was succeeded by Père Le Duc. Sister Emery was the first Lady Superior, but in 1873 she was succeeded by the present Superior, Sister St. Roch. In 1871 Bishop Grandin was elected coadjutor of St. Boniface, and on the day of his election he was transferred to the Bishopric of St. Albert. To recur to the history of the mission buildings, however, the present church was erected in 1870. It is a neat-looking frame building, 80 feet by 32, with transepts 70 feet long and a vestry 40 feet in length. There is a good bell in the steeple; another in a strong wooden framework outside, but near the church, though independent of it. The church is neatly and tastefully painted and decorated inside; and altogether it is a credit to the mission and the settlement.

The finest building at the mission however, and one of the finest, if not indeed the finest, building in the North-West Territory, is the Bishop's palace. This is a handsome frame structure, 80 by 32 feet, three stories high, including a large attic lighted by rows of dormer windows, besides a large and well-lighted basement. Though this building is not yet quite finished, there

are now in it twenty-seven rooms ready for occupancy and furnished. The drawing-room is very tastefully furnished; one of the most striking and valuable pieces of furniture in it being a beautifully carved pine sideboard. The carving on this (all hand work of course) was executed by Brother Vintighen, an ecclesiastical student now at the Mission. He is a Belgian who, besides having rare talent as an artist, had devoted much time to art studies before leaving the Old World. It is seldom that such a specimen of carving as this sideboard is seen outside collections of work hundreds of years old. It is well calculated to impress one with the idea that real wood carving is rapidly becoming one of the lost arts. Indeed, I cannot remember ever having seen a specimen of modern work that will at all compare with it. In front of the palace on the lawn stands a beautiful statue of the Virgin Mary carved by the same hand out of poplar and white birch.

THE PROPOSED CONVENT AND HOSPITAL.

Père Le Duc this year purchased 100,000 feet of sawn lumber for the purpose of building a convent and hospital for the Sisters, which will be commenced next summer. This building will be 100 feet long, 40 feet wide, and three stories high.

The occupants of the mission buildings are as follows:—Bishop Grandin, four priests, ten lay brothers, five ecclesiastical students, all belonging to the order of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. There are eight sisters, and six auxiliaries and girls, about twenty little orphan boys and a similar number of orphan girls, whites, half-breeds, and pure Indians. The little boys are schooled for five or six years, then set at work with the lay brothers to learn a trade. The girls are under the care of the Sisters till they are married. There are also fourteen boarders at the school, and a daily attendance by the children of the settlement averaging from seventy to eighty. The children are taught, besides the ordinary branches, English, French, and Cree or Stony.

RESOURCES OF THE MISSION.

They have at the mission now one blacksmith, two carpenters, one shoemaker, and one bookbinder, besides farm labourers. The mission operates a farm of 130 acres, keeps fifty horses and twenty-six cows, forty-six sheep, twenty oxen, forty young steers, six mules; and a large number of hens and ducks. Within the past year about 1,000 lbs. of butter and a large quantity of cheese have been made by the Sisters, and this year the grain product of the farm will foot up to about 800 bushels of wheat and 200 bushels of barley. Of course the whole annual product of the farm is consumed by the mission itself, which as yet is not quite self-supporting.

The toll-bridge across Sturgeon River opposite the church was built at the expense of the mission in 1875, at a cost of \$1,300; and the tolls collected barely amount to enough to pay interest on the investment and keep it in repair.

The St. Albert Mission property extends about four miles down Sturgeon River and about six miles up the same stream, including the frontage on both banks of the river. There are now settled on this property 180 families, making a total population of some 900 souls; but statistics would have made a much better showing had it not been that in 1870 a frightful visitation of small-pox swept away no less than 300 of the population. There are in the settlement about 2,500 acres of land under cultivation. The Sisters have a large pharmacy, and the Sister Superior is a thoroughly qualified physician. The Mission is allowed \$5 per head (the regular Government bounty to Indian men, women, and children) for all the Indian orphans whom they keep, and Père Le Duc has proposed to the Government that the Mission should be paid 25c. per day for all the Indian children for whom the Mission will undertake to provide, offering at the same time to guarantee that in thirty years there shall be no more pauper Indians in the North-West territory. At present Père Le Duc says that the Mission is feeding, on an average, no less than thirty or thirty-five starving Indians daily.

Fifteen miles down Sturgeon River there is a grist mill with two runs of stones, which does the grinding for the settlers.

I remained over night at the Bishop's palace, the guest of Père Le Duc, and on Sunday morning attended service in the little church. Though the day was intensely cold and stormy, there was a very large congregation, who listened with evident interest to the sermon by Père Le Duc. After preaching for about twenty or twenty-five minutes in French, the reverend gentleman gave a brief synopsis of his discourse in English, for the benefit of those of the congregation who did not understand French.

In the afternoon I was shown through the school-house, where the children (both orphans and boarders) were assembled. The little folks looked very happy and comfortable, and the little girls sang some few hymns both in French and English very prettily. Just as these exercises were concluded, both the bells rang out a merry peal, and the little community was thrown into the wildest state of joyous excitement by the sudden and rather unexpected return of Bishop Grandin, who had been absent for some six months visiting the many scattered missions under his charge.

SETTLERS AT ST. ALBERT.

While at St. Albert I had an interview with two well-to-do settlers, who have made a home in this prosperous little settlement. The first of these, William Cust, came originally from the County of Derry, Ireland, which he left in 1847. He had been trading in the Peace River country, but five years ago he was bought out by the Hudson Bay Company, receiving \$2,500 in cash. With this he came to St. Albert to settle, and commenced farming. He has this year 180 acres in wheat, which, despite the very unfavourable season, will yield not less than 30 bushels to the acre; 35 acres of barley on new ground which will yield 35 bushels to the acre and twelve acres of oats yielding 25 bushels to the acre. Of course Mr. Cust's crops are not at all up to the average this year, nor were they last year, as during the latter part of

both summers, when they ought to have been maturing rapidly, the weather was so cold, cloudy and wet that they remained almost at a standstill, and finally, just as the time for harvesting came on the farmers were caught with a spell of winter weather, which has this year compelled them for the time being to suspend operations altogether, so that unless good weather should come again fall ploughing will be an utter impossibility. Like many other pushing and intelligent agriculturists in the North-West, Mr. Cust has come to the conclusion that in future the safest and best plan of operations will be to do as much fall sowing as possible, that is, putting in spring crops in the fall, so that they will germinate during the first warm days of spring, and mature for harvest long before the early frosts, that are liable to visit this part of the country, can possibly reach them. I am informed that Mr. Reid, down at Fort Saskatchewan, has tried the experiment of sowing spring wheat in the fall, and that the results have been most satisfactory. As land is plentiful here crops of this kind can be put in on new ground without sacrificing any standing crops, even should the current period of backward springs and early winters continue, which is indeed a very improbable contingency. As I have already stated, however, Mr. Cust has a very large and valuable crop this year, despite the unfavourable season and notwithstanding the fact that labour is scarce and dear here, he is growing and harvesting his crops for a very moderate annual outlay. He employs from four to five men the year around, and supplies the place of others with a very complete outfit of agricultural machinery and implements. He keeps nine work horses, ten working oxen, fifteen milch cows, and a large herd of young cattle and sixty breeding cows. This year he has been using an Osborne self-binder, which, he says, saves not only a great deal of labour, but a fair share of the grain which otherwise would be wasted. Mr. Cust expresses himself as well satisfied with the Edmonton region despite the many drawbacks as to climate which the past two years have developed. The prices are good for all sorts of farm produce, and though there are as yet many difficulties to contend with, his own financial success furnishes abundant proof that with all its drawbacks, farming pays well here in the long run.

I also had some conversation with Mr. Maloney, formerly of Cullingwood, who came here this spring. He has already broken 40 acres of land, and next season he will commence farming on a large scale.

St. Albert is beautifully located on the high sloping shores of the Sturgeon River, and altogether the settlement is one of the most beautiful in the North-West.

CHAPTER XXXV.

EDMONTON AND ITS VICINITY—ONCE MORE ON THE TRAIL—THE FIRST DAY'S JOURNEY
EN ROUTE TO BATTLEFORD.

EDMONTON, N. W. T., Oct. 13.—I returned to Edmonton on Sunday evening and spent Monday and to-day in looking over the settlement and outfitting for my journey to Battleford. Though my visit to Edmonton has been made at a most unfavourable time for forming favourable impressions concerning it, I cannot fail to recognise the fact that it is yet destined to become a place of very considerable importance. The soil is extremely rich, and worked by intelligent and industrious farmers it cannot fail to prove very productive. Timber is plentiful within easy reach of any part of the settlement; firewood is now only about one dollar per cord, and there is plenty of good bituminous coal scattered throughout the whole region. Indeed some of the settlers are using coal in their houses, but the enormous prices charged for coal stoves operates with a great many as a bar to the use of coal. A base-burning stove such as would cost \$35 or at most \$40 in Toronto, costs \$125 here. This, however, is only a fair sample of the exorbitant prices charged for almost everything that can be bought here. Horseshoeing costs a dollar a shoe, bacon is 30c per pound, flour 15c per pound, oats are hard to get hold of at 6½c per pound. Barley is nominally \$1 per bushel, but a settler here charged me \$2 per bushel for barley that was nearly half chaff. Only a very few have done any threshing as yet, and they evidently desire to profit as much as possible by their promptitude in getting a portion of their thrashing done. Meals at all the boarding houses cost fifty cents each, no matter how plain the repast happens to be, though in justice to them, I am bound to acknowledge that considering the bill of fare they furnish, and the cost of provisions here, I think their rates are rather low than otherwise.

Within the last few months what is called the town of Edmonton has grown very rapidly, while the influx of farmers into the settlement has been most extraordinary. It is probable that during the season just past not less than 400 settlers have come into the settlement for the purpose of remaining here, while others have called here en route to more remote points. Not long ago a rough census showed a voting population of over 350, and it will at this rate be only a short time before Edmonton will have the requisite number of settlers (1,000) to entitle it to representation.

COAL.

The miserable weather that has prevailed since my arrival here has rendered anything like an exploration of the coal seams which abound along the Saskatchewan an utter impossibility, but I have seen the coal burning beautifully, both in grates and in base-burning stoves, and from what I have

heard I have no doubt that in a very few years coal will be cheap and readily obtainable all along the western slope of the base of the Rocky Mountains from the 49th parallel away northward to the Peace River district, and I do not know how much farther. Some of these seams show themselves for a long way along the banks of the Saskatchewan and other streams flowing out of the mountains, and these seams run all the way from two feet to more than twenty feet in thickness. The coal found here is much better than the Souris coal and I imagine that the day is not very far distant when it will be exported in very large quantities.

GOLD.

Gold mining here has so far not been attended with any very encouraging results. Fine gold is found in the sand bars of the North Saskatchewan not far west of Edmonton, but as yet it has not been found in sufficient quantities to warrant capitalists in investing very largely in it.

To-morrow I shall start eastward, hoping to reach Battleford before winter fairly sets in. To-day I managed to trade one of my ponies (Sandy) for the stout pinto stallion, that the half-breed who accompanied us from Calgary brought along with him. Poor Sandy was sadly reduced, and could hardly be depended upon for an hour's drive, so that it was merely a choice between trading him off and dropping him on the road. Altogether my prospects for the next stage of my long journey are not particularly unfavourable. My best pony (Blanche) is a trifle lame, but Rowdy (the pony I purchased at Bear Hills) is a fine little fellow in harness, and will be able to give the little mare a chance to recruit by working in her place, and the others, though somewhat thin, are in good heart, and will, I trust, pull through all right. I have been able to secure grain enough to feed once a day on the journey to Battleford, unless the trip proves much longer than I expect it will, and as the weather, though cold (only four above zero this morning), is pleasant, my prospects are much more favourable altogether than they were a week ago.

I cannot say that I have any regrets at leaving Edmonton, at this season of the year, at all events. Edmonton is certainly a promising settlement, but at the same time there is no doubt that is the best advertised place in the North-West, in proportion to its importance. It is a very fine place, but it has some serious drawbacks. It takes a long, tedious, and expensive journey to reach Edmonton by any route the settler may choose to take, and having reached there, unless he has everything he needs along with him, he will find it a most expensive place in which to exist, to say nothing of living comfortably, which, for a man not in really good circumstances, is absolutely out of the question. Indeed, the habit which settlers and traders here, and in many other places throughout the North-West, have of practising the most ridiculous extortion upon strangers, is hurtful, not only to the best interests of the country, but, in the long run, to their own, as no one at all posted as to the state of affairs here would think of coming to such places to buy supplies if he could possibly avoid it. I do not mean to say that the habit

of over-charging prevails everywhere throughout the North-West, but it is far more common than it ought to be. Battleford is a notable exception to the rule in this respect, as my experience would lead me to believe that there a traveller can secure very fair value for his money, when the cost of freighting is taken into account. One of the most objectionable features in dealing with traders in the North-West is that they wish to give a stranger real value for nothing or else charge him three or four prices for it, and it is really a luxury to reach a place like Battleford, where he can meet traders who will deal with one on thoroughly business-like principles.

IN CAMP 28 MILES FROM EDMONTON, en route to Battleford, Oct. 19.—I left Edmonton this morning, and by half-past ten I had broken camp on the south side of the river and started eastward, Peter driving ahead and I riding behind and herding the spare ponies. The first three and a half or four miles of the trail led us down to the steep bank of Mill Creek and along the Valley of the Saskatchewan till the other slope of the valley of the little stream was ascended, and we had reached the high level of the prairie again. The view of Edmonton from the south-east was an excellent one, the dozen or more new frame clapboard buildings standing out in bright relief in the strong sunlight against the deep, rich blue of the Northern sky. For the next three or four miles the trail was good, leading through choice agricultural land, consisting of fine prairie country with numerous little poplar bluffs, and occasional little fringes of grey willow that marked the course of some little marshy stream.

A little before noon we came to one of these little streams having steep, slippery banks, and it was with a good deal of trouble that we managed to make the ponies haul the load through it. In the afternoon the country through which the trail passed was rather lower, but still good, with occasional high ridges affording a commanding view of the half-wooded prairie that stretched away in the distance in all directions. Upon the whole, however, the land passed during the afternoon's drive appeared to me rather wet and cold to be termed first-class agricultural soil, and this objection would apply to a large section of this particular locality, though it will doubtless be all settled up in time, as farmers in Ontario are now making money off sections of country vastly inferior to it. To-night I am camped about 26 miles from Edmonton, by the trail we have come, and just beside my tent is that of Professor Kenaston, with whom I have travelled in company since leaving Edmonton.

Professor Kenaston has been sent out by the C. P. R. Syndicate to look up a line for a branch from the main line of the C. P. R. to Edmonton. His course has been from Moose Jaw Creek, some fifty miles west of Qu'Appelle, past the elbow of the South Saskatchewan and thence by Hay Lakes to Edmonton. He reports having seen plenty of good land along the trail, but that he had found the country between Hay Lakes and Edmonton (a strip of some forty miles wide) very low and wet. His course was considerably south of the country I have seen, and of any that I am likely to see on my present

trip. He is travelling with a light buckboard drawn by two ponies, and two carts with four horses, and two men, one of whom is a half-breed guide.

Just as we were fairly settled around our camp-fire, after supper was out of the way, we heard the tramping of horses' feet along the trail, and a few minutes later a waggon and two carts fetched up at our camp-fire. I was not a little surprised to find that the outfit was that of Mr. Pagerie and Mr. Fairbanks, his son-in-law. The latter had remained behind with the rest of the waggons and carts, but Mr. Pagerie was accompanied by his wife and children, including his married daughter, Mrs. Fairbanks, and her baby. This child is called "Lorne," and he is the little fellow who was born on the Salt Plains, this side of Touchwood Hills, and who was mentioned in my journal at the crossing of the South Saskatchewan, where the Governor-General's party overtook Mr. Pagerie's outfit when His Excellency was coming west. The young traveller and his mother are looking none the worse of their long and tedious journey, but at the same time people can judge of the great extent of this territory and the difficulties to be encountered in traversing it when they remember that Mr. Pagerie and his family have been on their way from Winnipeg since the middle of June, and they are still some hours' drive from their destination, which is Fort Saskatchewan. There is sharp frost to-night, and writing my journal in my tent is anything but a cheerful occupation, but I shall probably have chilled and numb fingers many a time before I reach the comforts of civilization again.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

ARRIVAL AT FORT SASKATCHEWAN—RECORD OF SEVERAL DAYS' JOURNEY.

IN CAMP 51 MILES FROM EDMONTON, en route to Battleford, October 20.
—Camp was broken at an early hour this morning, and a drive of thirteen miles (by Professor Kanaston's odometer) brought us to Fort Saskatchewan. The country through which the trail led this morning was chiefly of rich black prairie soil fairly timbered with small poplar bluffs. The region is admirably adapted for settlement and is just such as settlers usually look for in this country. There is plenty of fine open prairie land for growing grain and root crops, while the poplar bluffs afford plenty of fire-wood and logs for houses, stables, &c., as well as fence rails. There are a few settlers scattered along the south side of the river between Edmonton and Fort Saskatchewan, while the country along the north shore of the river is said to be well settled up.

Fort Saskatchewan is a post where the Mounted Police have a small force in command of Captain Gagnon. It was established by the Mounted

Police in 1875. There is a stockade (with bastions at two of the corners) enclosing good stables, barracks, officers' quarters, store-houses and other buildings, constructed of poplar logs. At present there are only a very few men in the fort, but in the event of the police being reinforced the number of men here will be considerably increased. On the opposite side of the river there are several settlers whose farms in the river bottoms look extremely well, though they, in common with other farmers in this region, lost considerable through the backwardness of the season and the visit of early frosts. Mr. Reid, one of the settlers on this flat, last year tried the experiment of sowing spring wheat late in the fall, and the result was that this season he had a fine crop of excellent wheat which was harvested in time to escape the early frost, which did so much damage throughout the whole Edmonton region. Other crops of wheat in the vicinity of Fort Saskatchewan averaged from 25 to 30 bushels to the acre, but it is not probable that the wheat will be of a very good quality, as very much of it was damaged by the frost before it was harvested. Barley here averages nearly or quite fifty bushels to the acre, and my informant (Capt. Gagnon) assured me that from sixty to seventy bushels of oats to the acre was no uncommon average here. Until the present season all root crops have yielded uncommonly well, but the frost of this season fastened them into the ground, and at present it is impossible to tell how they will turn out. I was shown a head of cabbage to-day weighing 30 lbs.

At Fort Saskatchewan I overtook Mr. H. Grant-Dalton and Mr. R. H. M. Pratt, who, with an outfit consisting of two waggons, twelve ponies and one servant, were travelling homeward via Battleford, Touchwood and Fort Ellice to their homes, which are at Minnedosa and Portage La Prairie respectively. They are both Englishmen who have spent some years in Manitoba. They had just returned from a hunting and pleasure trip from Winnipeg to the Kootenaie Pass in the Rocky Mountains. They were accompanied on their western journey by two English naval officers—Captain H. C. Aitchison and Captain A. J. W. Musgrave. On the 13th of June they left Portage La Prairie with an outfit of sixteen ponies, three waggons and two carts. They travelled across the prairie, crossing the Assiniboine at Brandon, and thence by way of Moose Mountain, Wood Mountain, Cypress Hills (Fort Walsh), and Fort McLeod to the mountains, and after a stay of a month in the Kootenaie Pass enjoying very fair sport, they returned to McLeod, where Captains Aitchison and Musgrave left the party, intending to descend the Missouri in a small boat till they could reach steamers by which they intended to travel to Bismarck or Omaha, and thence by rail to the Atlantic seaboard. They had good sport both on the prairie and in the mountains, killing antelope, buffalo, mountain sheep and mountain goats. They had also capital sport catching trout in the mountain streams, some of the fish taken being of dimensions calculated to astonish Ontario fishermen.

They report that the tract of prairie lying between Brandon and Moose Mountain is made up almost entirely of fine agricultural land, but that that lying between Moose Mountain and Fort McLeod is almost worthless for agricultural purposes. It is made up of dreary, barren flats, strongly impreg-

nated with alkali, alternating with ridges composed chiefly of gravel, loose boulders, and sand. West of Fort McLeod, and from there to the Kootenai Pass, they travelled through very fine prairie country, where the land was of the best character, whether for grazing or agricultural purposes. They consider the land lying between the Belly and Kootenai Rivers better adapted for cattle and horse ranching than any they have seen on the whole trip.

In the afternoon Professor Kenaston's outfit and mine took a longer trail than that taken by Messrs. Pratt and Grant-Dalton, and the result is that we are camped away from them. We travelled this afternoon till sunset through a fairly good but rather low prairie country, thickly interspersed with clumps of grey willow and white poplar. With a moderate outlay for drainage it would be an excellent region for farming. Our camp to-night is close to what is said to be the first crossing of Beaver Creek, but from the size of the stream we have just crossed (by means of a shaky brush bridge) I am inclined to think it must be a branch of that stream. All around our camp are little bluffs of poplar and swales, or sloughs, fringed with gray willow. The sunset to-night was bright and warm, and there is every appearance of fine weather. The stream is said to be only nine miles from Fort Saskatchewan, but Professor Kenaston's odometer makes the distance twelve miles, which is evidently much nearer the mark. Indeed, the people in this country appear utterly incapable of judging distances. The average half-breed guide or freighter has not the slightest idea as to what a mile is. They will tell you that one point is from another so many "days." Now a "day" is a very indefinite quantity. It may mean a day's travel in December, when there are only a few hours available for travelling, when the carts are heavily laden; the ponies almost played out, and when the roads are in a most abominable condition; or it may mean a day's travel, when with fresh ponies, empty carts, and fair roads, they are hurrying down to Winnipeg and crowding nearly fifteen hours' steady jogging into a day's travel. In speaking of a short distance, they will tell you that it is so many "pipes," which means that in travelling the distance in question a freighter will fill and smoke his pipe a given number of times. Now, with such very indefinite data as this upon which to work, the average white settler here is weak enough to attempt to give the traveller distances as reliable, when he knows well enough that the next man questioned will give a totally different answer. To-night there was the most brilliant aurora I ever beheld. Instead of being an irregular shifting light above the Northern horizon such as is usually seen in Ontario, it consisted of a bright rainbow-shaped luminous zone, white as frosted silver and shedding as bright a light as the full moon. As I close my journal to-night the only sound that breaks the stillness of these unfrequented wilds is the mellow muffled clinking of Punch's bell, the heavy breathing of my tired fellow-travellers, and the low booming of cracking ice in some yet unseen lake away to the eastward.

BEAVER CREEK, 71 MILES OUT FROM EDMONTON, en route to Battleford, Oct. 21.—The sun rose in a mass of lowering red clouds this morning, prom-

is much more unfavourable weather than that we have experienced to-day. We drove twenty miles (by Professor Kenaston's odometer), and reached our present camp at Beaver Creek about one o'clock. Here we found Mr. Grant-Dalton and Mr. Pratt camped on the bank of Beaver Creek, which is a deep, swift flowing, black-looking stream, with cut banks and quicksands on both sides. At the time we reached the creek Mr. Grant-Dalton had just come out of the water after a decidedly impromptu bath. They had found themselves at the bank of the creek with the boat pulled up on the opposite side. They built a raft upon which the Captain attempted to cross, but finding that the swift current was rapidly conveying him down to a point where the shore was lined with broad ledges of thin ice, he took a "header" off the raft and swam through the cold water to the opposite shore. At the time of the arrival of our party he had just returned with the little boat, which is the only conveyance across this muddy little stream.

After a short deliberation it was decided to adopt Professor Kenaston's suggestion and build a bridge, and as the representative of the Syndicate and an engineer to boot, he was entrusted with the superintendence of the undertaking. He at once selected a point a short distance above the regular crossing, where the stream was about forty feet wide, or, perhaps, a trifle more. This afternoon has been spent in an attempt at bridging this place, and at present we have one stringer in place, but as the end this way rests upon a pile of driftwood that is only held together by a quantity of half-thawed ice, the general impression prevailing in the party is that the bridge when completed will not be very safe. Several of the ponies are lost to-night, and the weather is warm and threatening, so that altogether our prospects are not very promising.

IN CAMP, BEAVER CREEK, North-East side, en route to Battleford, October 22nd.—We were out early this morning, but a good deal of time was lost in hunting up the lost ponies, so that the forenoon was well advanced before we could turn our attention to the crossing of Beaver Creek, which was the business of the day. Mr. Pratt, Mr. Grant-Dalton, and myself all united in the belief that the "Syndicate Bridge" even, if completed, would not be safe. We decided, as the day was warm and pleasant, to try the experiment of making the horses swim the river. First we tried a chestnut stallion at a point where there was a moderately good place from which to launch him. He tumbled into the water head and heels and disappeared for a few seconds, and finally came up in a half-strangled condition, and at once Mr. Grant-Dalton and I began hauling in the line to bring him across the stream, as he appeared strongly inclined to turn back and go ashore again as soon as possible. As soon as he found out what we wanted he turned and swam toward us, but just as we expected to see him walk up the bank he sank in a treacherous quicksand, and it took four or five of us, tugging and hauling with ropes some ten minutes, to pull him out on dry land, and even then he was so exhausted that he could scarcely walk away. The next experiment was tried at another point with a trifle more satisfactory results, but the third animal, a pretty little bay mare, was nearly drowned, as she fell into the water back

downward and was almost strangled before we could haul her ashore. By the time two more ponies had been nearly drowned, we decided that we should have to build a bridge. It was lunch time, however, and we held another consultation, during which Professor Kenaston strongly advocated the completion of the "Syndicate" bridge, insisting that it was "all safe."

"I think," said he, as he finished his lunch, "that I'll go up and look at it to see if it's all right."

"You needn't walk up," remarked Mr. Pratt, who was lighting his pipe at the door of the tent, "for here it comes now, and you can look at it as it floats past." And sure enough, the first Syndicate bridge in the North-West was drifting down the dark, muddy stream. Mr. Grant-Dalton and Peter then walked down and selected another point for a bridge, and all hands at once set to work to build a new bridge. The timber (white poplar), would only make stringers about thirty feet long, and our plan was to build little log piers about six feet wide, at either side of the stream, and in this way make a secure foundation far enough out into the stream to support the stringers. The work was going on nicely till the energetic representative of the Syndicate appeared upon the scene, and without consulting any one felled two large poplars across the stream, just at the point where the piers were being made. When asked the reason of his extraordinary conduct he replied, "there are your stringers already in place." Of course the great branches on the trees made them very objectionable stringers, but there they were, and we had no choice but to use them, though they caught every bit of driftwood and anchor ice that was floating down the swift current. After all hands had worked hard till near sundown a narrow foot-bridge of poplar stringers, covered with split crosties, brush and hay was completed. The ponies were then led across one by one, and all but one of my ponies and more than half of the ponies belonging to the whole of the outfit had been transported when an unfortunate accident occurred, which proved the worst piece of luck I have experienced so far in the whole trip. "Rowdy" (the pony I had bought at Bear Hills) was always a troublesome rascal to catch, and Peter was following him to try and put the halter on him to lead him across, when suddenly he came galloping down to the bridge where I was standing. He reached the bank some distance from the end of the bridge, and the next instant he made a spring to reach the bridge. His forefeet struck on the bridge but his hind ones sunk in the water, and after struggling along in this manner halfway to the middle of the bridge, he sank so low that the swift current caught his quarters and swept him under the bridge. In a second or two his nose came just to the surface, but the long-tangled branches on Professor Kenaston's stringers held him fast, and though every effort was made to save him, he was drowned in less than two minutes. This is a very serious loss to me, situated as I am, as I shall need every pony in my outfit to reach the railway. Rowdy was a capital little horse, and it will trouble me to replace him at any price. I shall not soon forget Beaver Creek or the sight of the poor little fellow struggling in its dark waters.

The bridge was soon repaired and the rest of the ponies were brought across safely, but it was dark before the job was completed.

IN CAMP, 99 MILES FROM EDMONTON, *en route* to Battleford, Oct. 21. — To-day our three outfits have travelled 28 miles without knowing whether we are on the right trail or not. We have been travelling in a south-westerly direction over a frightfully rough trail. The land, though low, is rich, and well adapted for farming purposes, and will, I have no doubt, be settled up in time by a prosperous farming community. To-day the weather has been bright and warm, and all in all, we have had a pleasant day's travel. In the afternoon we passed close beside a long lake, which I suppose to be Egg Lake, and to night we are camped close beside a big bluff, which shelters us from the cold breeze from the north-west, which set in just after sun-down. To the south of our camp and just across the trail is a small lake or large slough, with wide, marshy borders, and our ponies are all enjoying a rare treat off the long frozen grass which almost conceals them. Now that all is hushed and quiet, the wolves, and coyotes are keeping up a loud and inexpressibly mournful chorus on all sides of the camp. This is indeed a lonely hour, and it is at such a time as this that one is apt to find himself carefully weighing the chances of ever reaching civilization again. In spite of my bad luck at Beaver Creek I still have a fairly good outfit. By means of pretty liberal feeding I have managed to keep my horses from failing any since I left Edmonton, and indeed, I am not sure but they are gaining a trifle; but on the other hand people are lost on these great plains every autumn. Should winter overtake us here (and it is liable to at any time), I am afraid my chances of pulling through with my ponies would be seriously damaged, but if this good weather holds for a few weeks longer, I hope we shall be near enough the end of the railway to be comparatively safe.

IN CAMP, 129 MILES FROM EDMONTON, *en route* to Battleford, Oct. 24. — We are still in doubt regarding the trail, and still keeping a south-westerly direction. The country traversed to-day has been more open, but it is badly cut up with great sloughs and marshes, with only here and there ridges of fine farming land running through it. Altogether the scenery is more picturesque, as every eminence commands a view of numerous little ice-bound lakes, which, with the dark brown leafless bluffs, come out in bright relief against the endless stretches of pale dun prairie grass waving in the never-resting breeze.


Our camp to-night is in the lee of a bluff in a low, flat peninsula that is almost surrounded by half-frozen sloughs. To-day I ventured out on one of these sloughs to secure a drink of pure water. The result was that the ice broke and I came back to the trail and remounted my pony, pretty thoroughly drenched with ice-water, and with two ugly cuts in my right hand. Hereafter I shall not be very particular about a few grass roots, and bits of moss in drinking water. Again the sun set in a flood of amber light, promising more good weather, and as I close my journal to-night the howling of coyotes and wolves is drowning the music of the ponies' bells.

IN CAMP, 154 MILES FROM EDMONTON, *en route* to Battleford, October 25.—To-day the weather has been warm and clear. The trail has been leading through beautiful rich uplands traversed by numerous little running streams. At one point we had to build a bridge to cross a little creek, and just after our noon camp we lost the dim trail we had been following, so that all the afternoon we had been travelling by compass. We are now trying, by following a south-easterly course, to reach the telegraph trail, which is said to be a good one, and to go straight to Battleford. Late this afternoon we parted company with Professor Kenaston, who took a more southerly course. To-night we are camped on a pretty little peninsula that is almost surrounded by a little bight in a deep, narrow stream, which is probably one of the main tributaries of Vermillion River. This morning, while the ground was still frozen and slippery, my pony fell with me and I received a severe wrench across the loins by being pitched over his head.

Prairie chickens are very plentiful here, and I am very glad of it, as my rations are already becoming so short that I fear I shall be without provisions before I can reasonably hope to reach Battleford.

Beavers are here in great numbers. I saw a very large one this morning, and their work is to be seen everywhere. To-night, as I close my diary, the wolves and cayotes are keeping up a dismal concert on all sides of our camp, their music being at times fairly deafening. We have driven about twenty-five miles to-day.

IN CAMP, 179 MILES FROM EDMONTON, *en route* to Battleford, October 26.—This morning we set a snubbing-post at the top of a steep bank and cut a road through the brush down to the river. We then drove the horses through the ford, and fastening a rope to the waggon, took a half-hitch around the snubbing-post, half the party letting the vehicles down into the water while the others hauled them out with the horses. We then set out across the country, and drove about twenty-five miles through a beautiful open prairie broken only by a very few scattering bluffs and one or two small strips of marsh land. We camped to-night beside a small bluff with only a very limited supply of wood. Again the wolves and cayotes are wailing a dismal chorus on all sides of our camp, and of all the mournful music ever listened to I think theirs is incomparably the most dreary.



CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ARRIVAL AT BATTLEFORD—A THRIVING CENTRE OF POPULATION—A CHEERFUL, PLEASANT PLACE—A VISIT TO THE POLICE BARBACKS—LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR LAIRD.

IN CAMP, 214 MILES FROM EDMONTON, *en route* to Battleford, October 27.—We were off at early dawn this morning, and as the prairie was very smooth the whole outfit rolled along at a rapid rate though a fine, level, open prairie. At about nine o'clock in the forenoon the long-looked for telegraph trail was reached, and a few moments afterwards we camped, to give the ponies a short rest, intending to make three hitches. Just before we broke this camp a small outfit of Mounted Police rode up. They are on their way from Battleford to Fort Saskatchewan and assert that they have been making forty miles per day. According to this we must be still over two hundred miles from Battleford, which seems incredible. Our whole drive to-day has been about thirty-five miles. Before reaching the telegraph trail our course lay through fine rolling uplands with scattered bluffs, but since reaching the trail the character of the country has been more diversified, being made up of rolling prairie, with numerous clumps and occasional long strips of timber and hundreds of little frozen lakelets. Our camp to-night is in a bluff on the crest of a little spherical mound just to the north of a little lake, whose dark blue waters are covered with ice that gleams in the bright star-light like a great sheet of glass. Professor Kenaston (whom we repassed on the trail) is camped about five hundred yards west of us on another mound, his cheery little camp fire blazing against the dark bluff in the background like a great star just sinking below the horizon. On the farther side of the lake I can hear the incessant barkings of the coyotes, and occasionally the long dismal wail of the wolf wakes the echoes away to the northward.

IN CAMP, 246 MILES FROM EDMONTON, *en route* to Battleford, October 28.—There is very little to note to-day. We have made about thirty-two miles along the trail through a country very similar to that traversed after reaching the telegraph trail yesterday. Lovely little lakes are scattered everywhere like gems of brightest blue among the dun-coloured mound-like hills of frozen prairie grass, while here and there clumps of purplish brown leafless trees stand out in strong relief against the pale yellow of the prairie and the deep azure of an autumn sky. To-day the timber was more plentiful, the hills larger and the lakes wider and longer. We traversed one large marsh, but for the greater part of the distance the trail was leading over rolling uplands of rich black soil. This afternoon the timber was becoming more scarce, and to-night camp is made in a little bluff on the northern slope of a great hill from the crest of which immense stretches of open rolling prairie are to be seen in all directions.

IN CAMP, 276 MILES FROM EDMONTON, *en route* to Battleford, October 29.— This morning there was such a thick fog that one could not see fifty yards from camp, and every limb and every twig was covered with a heavy coating of white rime, making the thick branches of the little trees in the bluff look like a net-work of frosted silver. The ponies had strayed off and it was nearly ten o'clock before they were hunted up and in harness ready for a start. The country traversed to-day was mostly made up of open prairie, with a few small bluffs of very small timber, high long hills and occasional deep broad coulees. The thick fog already referred to has continued all day, and everything one touches is cold and sticky. To-night the horses were as wet when they were turned out as if they had been travelling all day in a drenching rainstorm. Camp is made to-night almost in the centre of a little burned bluff on high uplands. The trail to-day led through some alkali sloughs, but I do not think they are impregnated strongly enough to be seriously detrimental to the land. There has evidently been a good deal of snow and rain in this region this fall, as the grass is beaten down flat and every little hollow contains a pool of frozen water.

IN CAMP, 302 MILES FROM EDMONTON, *en route* to Battleford, October 30.— Again our ponies were missing and it was ten o'clock before our outfit was on the trail once more. In the forenoon some fifteen miles were covered, the trail leading through open prairie uplands, here and there traversed by deep broad coulees with steep banks. All the forenoon the weather was bright, warm and sunny, but while we were in our noon camp a cold thick leaden mist came stealing swiftly down from the north-west over the pale yellow slopes of almost treeless prairie, and in less than an hour after first observing it we were enveloped in a dense cold fog that brought with it scattering flakes of snow. In the afternoon we made about eleven miles through low-lying marshy country, but the mist and drizzling rain and snow that overtook us at noon, continued to envelop us. Camp is made to-night in a little cleared place in the centre of a big bluff and as there is plenty of wood we have a roaring camp fire, but for all that this is a cheerless night. Indeed this late travelling across the prairie is at best dreary, cheerless work, and I shall be heartily glad when I can say good-bye to it.

IN CAMP, 322 MILES FROM EDMONTON, *en route* to Battleford, Oct. 31.— We have made twenty miles a day through a rather low-lying country somewhat cut up with sloughs and marshes. Though the drive has been a short one the ponies have had a hard time of dragging the waggons through deep half-frozen sloughs and mud-holes. The land here is rich, but will require considerable drainage before it can be of much value for agricultural purposes. At noon we took it for granted that we could not be more than twenty miles from Battleford, but before we were half an hour out of our noon camp we came upon the camp of a half-breed trader on his way to a new settlement on Battle River, who imparted to us the cheering intelligence that we had still some eighty miles to travel. Fortunately we were able to buy provisions from the trader, as the supplies of the whole outfit were becoming alarmingly

short. Having thus supplied ourselves with plenty of provisions we decided to give the ponies a rest, and to that end we went into camp shortly after passing the trader's camp.

Camp to-night is made just a little to the north of the trail, in the lee of a big bluff that affords a complete shelter from the cold, frosty breeze that is blowing from the north-west.

IN CAMP, 348 MILES FROM EDMONTON, *en route* to Battleford, Nov. 1.—The weather is still bright and cold. We drove twenty-six miles to-day through an excellent farming country. The soil is rich and strong and very fairly supplied with timber in little bluffs scattered over low rolling prairie. Toward evening we passed through several bad sloughs and finally camped in a cosy little nook completely sheltered on every side by thick bluffs. We have plenty of wood and a cheerful camp-fire to-night, but this long journey is becoming a very wearisome one. All day long one only looks forward to his nightcamp and the pleasure of wrapping himself in frosty blankets and stretching on the frozen ground till morning.

IN CAMP, 383 MILES FROM EDMONTON, *en route* to Battleford, Nov. 2.—The camp was astir at half-past three this morning, and the waggons were on the move as the first streaks of daylight were showing themselves in the east. This was a beautiful bright morning, and as the sun broke above the horizon the frost-covered yellow prairie grass was lighted up with its rays till every knoll looked as though it had been clothed with a rainbow-coloured mantle of diamonds, rubies and emeralds. The trail was good to-day, and by dint of brisk driving the outfit covered some thirty-five miles. The country through which we have been travelling is fine rolling prairie, with a very fair supply of moderate-sized timber in bluffs scattered in all directions. From some of the high ridges we crossed this afternoon fine views were had of the surrounding prairie, the purple bronze of the leafless bluffs contrasting prettily with the pale dun of the great broad stretches of frozen prairie grass reaching away in all directions. Towards evening great purplish-black walls of timber were seen rising both north and south of us, which means, I suppose, that we are approaching the confluence of the North Saskatchewan and Battle River, close upon which Battleford is situated. Our camp to-night is a little south of the trail in the lee of a little bluff. This is a bright, cold starlight night, and the temperature is so low that we may expect winter at any hour.

BATTLEFORD, No. 5.—We reached here on the 3rd inst., after a drive of thirteen miles from the camp at which I wrote the last instalment of this journal. The estimate of the distance travelled from Edmonton by Mr. Pratt, Mr. Grant-Dalton, and myself was nearly 400 miles, while Professor Kenaston, who steered a rather better course than we did, made the odometer measurement foot up to 368 miles, but it is very evident that we must have come a round-about course as Mr. King and others, who have gone over the trail with an odometer, make the distance 90 miles less. I must confess however, that I am at a loss to understand how such an extraordinary discrepancy

should exist in the odometer measurements even after due allowance is made for any possible deviations that we could possibly have made from the most direct route.

Battleford, the metropolis of the North-West Territory is in quite as thriving a condition as when I first saw it on the occasion of Lord Lorne's visit here last summer. We had not finished making camp before the hospitalities of Government House were extended to the whole party, but as we have still a great deal of camping out to do we all decided to make our tents our home during our stay here, though of course we were very grateful for the kind invitations extended to us by His Honour Lieutenant-Governor Laird, Colonel Herchmer, Mr. Forget (Secretary of State), and Colonel Richardson (Stipendiary Magistrate). What with calling on our many hospitable friends and making preparations for the long journey to Touchwood Hills, our time has been very fully occupied since our arrival here.

While Edmonton had suffered through a cold, wet season and early frosts, Battleford has been favoured with crops quite as good as the farmers expected when I passed through here on my way west. The grain crops were all harvested in good order, and many of the farmers sowed their root crops before the frost. Some, however, were overtaken by the cold snap, and as a consequence potatoes are likely to command a high price next spring. At the police farm here, which consists of only twenty-five acres adjoining the fort, 1,000 bushels of oats, besides a large quantity of potatoes, were raised. This large supply of oats only costs the country 35c. per bushel, while the contract price which the Government pays the Hudson Bay Company for oats at this post is \$2 per bushel. To-day I was shown a little field of only about five acres, upon which the owner had hired all the work done. He raised potatoes and oats, and the net profits were no less than \$500. An idea of the cost of living here and at Edmonton can be had by a comparison of prices. Here the best flour can be had for \$20 per barrel, while a telegram from Edmonton says that flour is difficult to obtain there at \$36 per barrel. Oats can be bought here at \$1.35 per bushel, while there it was difficult to buy oats at any price, 64c. per pound being the price charged me for some I managed to secure. Good butter can be had here for 50c. per pound, while an excellent quality of cheese can be bought for 30c.

Yesterday a mail from Cypress arrived here, bringing the news that the Bloods and Blackfeet had just returned from a horse-stealing raid that they had made upon the Crows south of the boundary-line. They had only very indifferent success. They did not bring back a single stolen pony; they received a sound thrashing, and came home decidedly crestfallen, after leaving the bodies of some of their best men on the American prairie. It is to be hoped that all these international raids may in future turn out in a similar manner.

It is with sincere regret that I look forward to resuming the trail to-morrow. Battleford is a cheerful, pleasant place in which to stay, even in bad weather, and with the first hour's sunshine the ground becomes dry, and the whole country wears a cheery aspect. There is certainly not a spot in the

North-West that has been more grossly slandered than this, but I am fully convinced that, in spite of all the hard things that have been said of it, it is destined to become a place of very considerable importance. It must in time become the natural outlet for the produce of a very large and extremely fertile and productive section of country. I have already had something to say about the country lying to the south and west of it, and I may add that from the most reliable information I can gather there is a very large and fertile tract of land lying to the north of the Saskatchewan, the whole of which must find an outlet here. The country to the south of Battleford is of such a character that heavy bull-trains could be driven through it with perfect safety, and a freighting route could easily be established between this point and Calgary or McLeod by establishing good ferries on Red Deer and Bow Rivers. As regards Edmonton this would be impossible, as the country around it is so soft that it is almost impossible to pass through it with loaded carts, to say nothing of those enormously heavy freighting waggons. As a point for settlement I have seen nothing in the whole North-West that surpasses Battleford. Its soil does not look so rich and black as that around Edmonton, but for all this the farmers are raising excellent crops, and in addition to this the seasons are reliable, and the soil is very easily worked. Indeed it is a cause of constant surprise to me that so many settlers have, during the past season, gone past Battleford (which is easily accessible), and encountered the difficulties incident to reaching Edmonton, where for the past two years the seasons have been very unreliable.

Another reason why Battleford is preferable to many other points in the North-West, is that the Indians are not at all likely to be troublesome here. Every band in this neighbourhood is making some attempt at farming, and the result is that they are comfortable and contented as compared with the Bloods and Blackfeet in the South. Hayter Reid, the Indian agent here, gives very encouraging accounts of the condition of the red men under his charge, and in his office I saw samples of grain grown on the reserves by the Indians themselves, which were very fair indeed. Mr. Reid had just returned from a visit to the Indians at Fort Pitt, north of the Saskatchewan, but owing to the unfavourable season and the early frosts, their crops had been nearly or quite a failure.

ANOTHER FELLOW-TRAVELLER.

At Battleford another traveller joined our outfit. This was Mr. J. J. McHugh, the agent from the Indian supply farm at Fish Creek, near Calgary. It will be remembered that in an earlier portion of this journal I mentioned the fact that Messrs. McHugh and Stimson intended going down Bow River and the South Saskatchewan to a landing near Prince Albert. They started down Bow River in company with a large survey party who had just returned from the exploration of the Bow River Pass in the Rocky Mountains. They managed to reach the Blackfoot crossing on Bow River, and there they found themselves frozen in, and they could proceed no further in that direction. After waiting some six or seven days, Mr. McHugh decided to come across

by the Governor-General's trail to Battleford for the purpose of overtaking me at that point. He reached here some days ago after having crossed the plain with two ponies and a cart in company with a half-breed horse-buyer. On their way over they saw a small band of Montana cattle which they followed for some eight or ten miles, supposing them to be buffalo.

Here Mr. McHugh abandons his cart, and with his two ponies joins my outfit. Hitherto Mr. Pratt and I have been riding on horseback and herding the spare ponies, and on leaving here we will have Mr. McHugh along with us, his other pony taking his turn with mine in hauling the waggon.

THE POLICE HORSES.

Last evening I spent some time in looking over the barracks here, which are in command of Superintendent Herchmer and Inspector Antrobus. Everything appeared to be in the most perfect order, but what surprised me most was the admirable condition to which the heavily-worked horses used in transporting the Governor-General and party have already been brought. Nearly all of these are already looking healthy and in very fair order, though of course they will be soft and unfit for very severe work for some months to come. Only ten out of the whole lot used were left dead in the road, and nearly, and indeed I think, all the others will be fit for moderate work this winter. This certainly speaks well for the manner in which these horses have been cared for, while the death-rate among them was very much lower than anyone who knows anything of travelling in the North-West could have anticipated.

The Police Fort at Battleford is the neatest and most complete in its appointments of any I have seen in the North-West.

I have not seen the head-quarters at Cypress Hills.

The barracks and officers' quarters are comfortable and commodious, and everything about the whole place is kept scrupulously clean and in good order, and, in short, everything indicates thoroughly good and soldierly conduct on the part of the men, and the strict and constant enforcement of thorough discipline by the officers.

To-day the rain has been falling almost incessantly, and our camp, which is on a low flat, threatens to be so flooded that we will have to move out of it to-morrow morning, rain or shine.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

WAYSIDE INCIDENTS—A DANGEROUS CROSSING OF THE SOUTH SASKATCHEWAN RIVER—THE SOIL AT AROLINE CROSSING—LOST ON THE PRAIRIES—A SERIOUS MATTER—SHEEP IN THE NORTH-WEST—ROUGH TRAVELLING.

IN CAMP, TWO MILES EAST OF GOVERNMENT HOUSE, BATTLEFORD, *en route* to Touchwood Hills, Nov. 6.—This morning our camp in Battle River bottoms was so wet and uncomfortable that we decided to turn out and drive to a point where we could find a better place in which to pitch our tents, and make a comfortable start to-morrow (Monday) morning. Had we decided to take what is known as the "hill trail" to the South Saskatchewan, we could have driven up the steep slope upon which a portion of the village now stands, and reached dry ground in five or ten minutes. By the advice of a number of Battleford people, however, we took the river trail, and this led us down the valley of Battle River and the Saskatchewan for about two miles, when, by ascending a high hill that was both steep and slippery, we reached our present encampment, which is just outside the city limits of Battleford. The weather is still dull and threatening, and I cannot help thinking that winter is at last close upon us. We are now on the edge of Eagle Hills, a high range that runs south from the Saskatchewan, just east of Battleford. The soil all through Eagle Hills is said to be very rich, and I learn that the Indians and the few settlers who have located here are doing remarkably well.

In my journal last September I remember to have alluded to a range of smaller hills just south-west of Battleford as a spur of the Eagle Hills. I was misinformed, however, as the range then referred to is called by the Crees the "Sliding Hills." It seems that the Crees hold that Noah formerly lived in this country, but that he finally made up his mind to go to England, where he is still living and "doing well." He accordingly rolled up his blankets and started on his way, but as he reached the crest of the highest hill in this range his heels slipped from under him and he sat down with such emphasis that he did not regain his feet till he had reached the bottom of the valley.

IN CAMP, 16 MILES FROM BATTLEFORD, *en route* to Touchwood Hills, Nov. 7.—This morning the weather was bright and pleasant, but this afternoon it turned cold and cloudy, and to-night as we rolled into camp there was a brisk snow storm in progress. All day long we have been dragging up and down high slippery hills and through horrible mudholes and sloughs. The land is rich and the growth of grass and wild shrubbery is luxuriant, but the surface of the country is so rough and broken up that much of it must be practically worthless for many years to come. There are, however, many fine plateaus and broad rich valleys that would afford locations for

choice claims. To-night camp is made in the lee of a large bluff to the north of the trail. It has been snowing all the evening and at one-time it looked as though we might be unable to take our waggons any further. As I close my journal, however, the eastern horizon has cleared, and just now the full moon rose in a flood of pale yellow light of wondrous brilliancy, and the leafless frosted limbs of a projecting point of bluff wrought a fanciful network of black and silver across her bright disc and the amber halo about her. Above this zone of clear sky hung a great dark cloud curtain, with thick billowy festoons of lemon gold, and pure glittering silver.

IN CAMP, 46 MILES FROM BATTLEFORD, en route to Touchwood Hills, Nov. 8.—This morning the weather was clear and bright and we made excellent time over the hard, frozen trail. There were some very bad creeks and ugly frozen hills, where we were compelled to dismount and all hands tug at the wheels and the backs of the waggons nearly the whole way up the hill. In one place one of Mr. Grant Dalton's teams both fell on a slippery hill, and the whole weight of the load rested for a few seconds on the shoulders of those of us who were pushing from behind. All along to the south of us to-day we could see the snow lying thick on the higher peaks of Eagle Hills, but along the trail there was little or none of last night's snow to be seen. The country traversed in the forenoon was made up of excellent soil, though it is somewhat hilly and cut up by numerous creeks, with heavy, steep banks. This afternoon the trail led through stony uplands that would not be very suitable for agricultural purposes. It must be remembered, however, that the trail we are following leads close along the south shore of the North Saskatchewan, and I am informed that the country a few miles to the south is of the choicest quality. Late this afternoon Messrs. Pratt, McHugh, and myself were herding the ponies nearly or quite a mile behind the waggons. We expected every moment to come in sight of bluffs where we could camp for the night, and in consequence we were careless about keeping the ponies close upon the leaders. Presently we lost sight of the waggons, and darkness coming on very suddenly the kyuses took it into their heads that it was time to camp, whether we wished to or not. They accordingly began feeding along the trail, and as often as we would attempt to drive them ahead they would scatter in all directions instead of following the trail in a compact band, as they usually do. Presently it became so dark that we could not see a pony fifty yards away, and it was only by repeatedly counting them that we could assure ourselves that we were bringing them along with us. On we trudged mile after mile in the darkness not knowing whether we had passed the camp or not. The night was bitterly cold, and of course we had no blankets with us; but we decided to face the situation and camp for the night at the bottom of the valley into which we were descending, but on reaching there we found the rest of the outfit just making camp there, near the margin of a small creek (one of the branches of Eagle Creek), and we were not long in becoming comfortably ensconced in Messrs. Pratt and Grant Dalton's tent, with a brisk fire roaring in the little camp stove. Our tents are pitched to-night in a little nook that is sheltered by high hills on the east, west, and south, while

a heavy clump of bush protects us from the north wind. On these cold nights, with the mercury down almost to zero, camping-out has none of the attractions that make it so popular with pleasure-seekers, and the hope of soon reaching the comforts of home again is our only consolation. Should winter overtake us in this region it is by no means certain that we shall ever reach civilization again. Our ponies are nearly all somewhat stale, and not a few of them show signs of leg-weariness. I still have two of the ponies with which I started from Carlton last summer, and Punch and Blanche are, I am happy to say, still in good working trim, though they have travelled over 2,000 miles each since last June. My other two are still keeping up to the work well, but I cannot reasonably expect the whole four to hold out all the way to the end of the railway, if snow should overtake us before we pass Touchwood Hills. One of Mr. McHugh's ponies (a roan gelding that I drive, with the always reliable Punch) is already hanging out signals of distress, and I fear he will not last much longer. Of the twelve ponies belonging to Messrs. Pratt and Grant-Dalton's outfit four have done the round trip, and are still doing very well. A fifth has done the whole trip, but she has been useless since she was nearly drowned in Beaver Creek, and it is not likely that she will be fit for any more work this season. The other seven ponies in their outfit are recruits, but all show signs of the tremendous ordeal through which they have passed. It is now very cold for camping out, but as Messrs. Grant-Dalton and Pratt have an excellent camp-stove in their tent they have kindly invited Mr. McHugh and myself to spend our evenings with them. Where wood is scarce all three waggons carry fuel, and Mr. McHugh, Peter, and I do our cooking and eating in the big tent. In this connection I would most unhesitatingly advise any one who contemplates a trip through the North-West to carry a camp stove. It is a light and compact piece of furniture, and in cold weather, or when travelling where wood has to be packed on the waggons, it will pay for itself in a very few days' travel.

IN CAMP, 71 MILES FROM BATTLEFORD, en route to Touchwood Hills, Nov. 9.—This morning while Mr. Pratt and I were bringing the ponies to camp, He mounted one of the lot in order to herd the rest, and no sooner was he on his back than the brute began to "buck" in the most energetic manner, but as Mr. Pratt is an accomplished horseman he kept his seat securely enough till the pony missed his footing and came down on his head. This unseated his rider, of course, and unfortunately he came down with tremendous force upon a stone, inflicting such serious injury that I am afraid the socket of his hip is fractured. This has rendered it necessary for Mr. Grant-Dalton to take his place in the saddle and allow the injured gentleman to drive one of the waggons, though his hurt is such a severe one that even the slightest jolting of the wagon is very painful to him. Mr. McHugh is also very much used up with a bad cold, so that our prospects are not very cheering, especially as the barometer is falling and the mercury is only 10° above zero. Indeed our camp to-night is anything but a cheery one. No one talks of the future, but I am sure there is not one in the whole outfit who does not experience rueful forebodings concerning it. We can only do

our best, and trust to a merciful Providence for the rest. By our own estimate of pace we have made about twenty-five miles to-day. We have crossed both branches of Eagle Creek, and leaving the North Saskatchewan near the elbow, wera it turns off in a north-easterly direction toward Carlton, we struck out across the open prairie for Clarke's crossing of the South Saskatchewan.

For the first few miles this morning the trail led along fine uplands, from which we were enabled to take our last look at the great dun-coloured slopes away to the north of the river, where the purple-bronze of the leafless bluffs contrasted richly with the limitless stretches of pale yellow prairie grass, a glorious boundless expanse that will some day be dotted over with countless farm houses, and be the home of a hardy, wealthy, and prosperous community, but which is now only pressed by the stealthy tread of the cayote as he chases the timorous hare, where even the lonely moose is seldom disturbed by the prowling half-starved savage.

As we left the bank of the great prairie stream of the north we passed through broad stretches of treeless plain, where the soil is both rich and dry, but the presence of many small boulders is likely to render it unpopular with farmers so long as the settler has so much choice country from which to select. We were compelled to drive till dark in order to reach water, and our camp to-night is in the centre of a small clump of bushes near an old well where there is but a scanty supply of water. This is a bright, moonlight night, clear and frosty. As usual the cayotes are keeping up a dismal concert on all sides of us, but I am quite as accustomed to this as I am to the music of the cow-bells worn by "Punch" and "Moses."

IN CAMP, 100 MILES FROM BATTLEFORD, en route to Touchwood Hills, Nov. 10.—This morning Mr. Pratt was so much better that it is very evident that his hurt was only a bruise, and it is to be hoped that in a few days he will be all right again. Mr. McHugh, on the other hand, grows steadily worse, and we have fears that he may not be able to continue the journey further than the South Saskatchewan. There is very little to note regarding our journey to-day. We have travelled some 29 miles according to our own estimate of distances through open, treeless prairie, where the soil looks rather light and gravelly, but where the rich growth of buffalo grass would indicate that it is much more productive than it appears to be. Indeed it is rather difficult to judge fairly of a prairie country at this season of the year, as everything looks parched and dried up with the severe frosts of early winter. This morning, shortly after leaving camp, we met an outfit of Syndicate engineers in charge of Mr. Douglass. They have been exploring the country in the vicinity of the elbow of the South Saskatchewan, and are now on their way to Battleford, where they will winter. Our camp to-night is alongside of a slough on the open prairie, where there is no shelter for the ponies. If a storm should come on to-night they would be certain to wander off, and in all probability be out of our reach in the morning. These mishaps, however, are only what one may expect in travelling over

the prairie at this season of the year. The night looks favourable, and it is to be hoped that our animals will be close to camp in the morning.

SHEEP IN THE NORTH-WEST.

This evening I had some conversation on the subject of sheep-raising with Mr. Pratt, who has had considerable experience in conducting a large farm near Westbourne, on the White Mud River, about 20 miles from Portage La Prairie, and experimenting carefully with a flock of one hundred sheep. He had every possible appliance for caring for the lambs, keeping the sheep in a snug, warm pen, and with his own hands rubbing each lamb dry as soon as it was dropped. In spite of all this, however, the lambs died off in great numbers, on account of the cold season at which they were dropped, and he found that the winters were so long that it was impossible to have the lambs come late enough to escape the severe cold. Mr. Pratt is of opinion that farmers in the North-West might keep a few sheep very profitably, but he is quite sure that sheep-raising on a large scale will never pay here.

The weather is warmer to-night, but the barometer is falling.

AROLINE CROSSING, SOUTH SASKATCHEWAN, 110 MILES FROM BATTLEFORD, Nov. 11.—This morning we drove about ten miles over dry uplands similar to that traversed yesterday, and reached the west bank of the South Saskatchewan about eleven o'clock. The prospects for crossing were anything but favourable, as the scow was hauled up high and dry on the opposite bank, and the river, which is about 300 yards wide at this point, was literally full of heavy masses of floating ice. The ferryman was hailed, but he declined to risk an attempt at crossing, as long as the ice continued to run in such quantities, but as the day was mild, with a light breeze from the south-east, he expressed the hope that he might ferry us by to-morrow evening, provided the wind did not take an unfavourable turn. Half an hour later the flow of ice became perceptibly lighter, and the ferryman (who proved to be Mr. J. F. Clark, formerly of Guelph, Ont.) crossed to our side of the stream in a small boat. He was informed that if he would consent to attempt to ferry us we would assume all risk, both as to our own property and his scow, and that we would pay him any sum he might think fit to ask. Finally finding that we were extremely anxious to cross, and that we had plenty of force to render him every possible assistance, he consented to make the attempt. Accordingly Mr. Grant, Dalton, and Mr. McHugh returned with him (at no inconsiderable personal risk) in the small boat through the floating ice to the east bank in order to help him and his assistant launch the big scow again and bring her over to take the first load across. While we were waiting for the scow to come over our party was still further augmented by the arrival of two miners who have been spending the summer on the North Saskatchewan washing for gold. One of these gentlemen, Mr. May, hails from the County of Lanark, Ont. They had only met with the most indifferent success, and they are now on their way home thoroughly disgusted with the Edmonton gold diggings. They left Edmonton

in a small boat, and after many delays and suffering considerable hardships they reached a point about 20 miles west of Battleford, where the ice barred their further progress, so they were obliged to abandon their boat and outfit and walk to the North-Western metropolis. Once in Battleford they purchased another outfit consisting of a horse and waggon, and hurried down to the crossing of the South Saskatchewan in order, if possible, to pass over with us.

In due time the scow was launched, and three oarsmen rowed with a will, while Mr. Clark worked hard at keeping the large masses of floating ice from collecting beneath the bow of the scow. At last a landing was effected away down the river, and it took an hour's work for all hands to get the great unwieldy craft up to the regular landing. Mr. McHugh's two ponies and my four, along with my waggon, were quickly loaded on the scow, but there was very little of daylight left as we pushed off among the great ice floes. And now the work commenced in earnest. Though the current was not running more than four miles an hour, and though the stream was not more than three hundred yards wide, the crossing of the river with the heavily-laden scow occupied fully an hour. At one moment the heavy ice floes would render it impossible to ply the starboard oars, and the scow would head directly up stream, and perhaps in three minutes more the oars on the port side would be disabled in a similar manner, and the unwieldy craft would be headed directly with the current. Again and again heavy masses of ice would collect under the bows, and no progress could be made till these obstacles would be removed. It was a weary task to struggle on in this way by the dim starlight, but at last the eastern shore of the river was reached, and after a great deal of pushing and hauling the boat was made fast to some bushes on the bank, while her bow was not more than eight or ten feet from the beach. First the ponies were pushed off into the cold ice water, and then came the task of getting the waggon ashore. This was by no means an easy undertaking. The night was intensely cold (the thermometer registering some twenty below zero), but we had no choice but to plunge our moccasined feet into the ice and water, and tug and lift at the waggon for ten minutes or more, as we stood knee deep in the freezing "slush" and water. At last our dismal task was accomplished, and turning the ponies out to feed, we all hurried into Mr. Clark's shanty to change our wet clothes, and dry and warm our freezing feet and legs by the little camp stove in which a briar fire of dry poplar was soon burning.

From Mr. Clark I learned that Aroline had not been without its sensations this season, though there is no house or semblance of a settlement within thirty-five miles of it. Only a short time ago a man came staggering into the shanty one morning more dead than alive. He proved to be a freighter named Wilson, who had been wandering over the prairie for six days without coat, blankets, or food. Some of his ponies had strayed away from his camp near Gabriel Dumont's Crossing, and in searching for them he had lost his way, and wandered for six days and nights before reaching Mr. Clark's shanty. During his wanderings he had encountered the severe snowstorm

that overtook me between Calgary and Edmonton; and, as may well be imagined, he was in a most pitiable plight when he at last reached food and shelter at Aroline. In a week, however, he was well enough to be removed by his friends, who had in the meantime been scouring the country in search of him. What I fear is a still more serious matter, is to be found in the case of a Mr. Macdonald, of Battleford. When I was at Battleford a good deal of uneasiness was felt concerning the protracted absence of Mr. Macdonald, who had been expected there for nearly a fortnight and who was known to have been on his way thither from Winnipeg. It appears from Mr. Clark's statement that Mr. Macdonald came to his place more than three weeks ago and borrowed two ponies to take him to Battleford, promising to return them in seven days. He had, he said, drowned his own two ponies in a small creek about ten miles from Aroline, and secured the team from Mr. Clark to take him through. This was just before the season of heavy mist and fog that overtook us west of Battleford, and it is now feared that he has lost his way in the fog and that he has wandered off and starved to death, as he had barely rations enough to take him to Battleford.

The soil in this region Mr. Clark informs me, is remarkably productive, though not particularly promising in appearance. Everything in his garden grew and matured admirably this season, and he is very confident that rain would do well here. Large quantities of small timber are to be found along the banks of the South Saskatchewan within easy reach, and altogether "Aroline" or "the telegraph crossing," as it is called, promises to become a prosperous settlement in time. To-morrow we shall probably spend in ferrying the outfit of Messrs. Pratt and Grant-Dalton and that of Mr. May and his partner.

AROLINE CROSSING, SOUTH SASKATCHEWAN, Nov. 12.—This morning the weather was, if anything, colder than last night, and the river was full of ice from shore to shore. The remainder of the outfit were brought across in two trips, and by half-past three the scow was hauled up high and dry again.

This evening a furious snow storm came on, and according to present appearances we shall not be able to move before day after to-morrow (Monday.)

To-night we had a consultation about the propriety of remaining here long enough to make jumpers with which to proceed eastward; but as we are but poorly provided with tools, and as we would have to travel four miles up the river to get birch and ash of which to make them we have decided to move on with our waggon.

SUNDAY, Nov. 13.—To-day the storm continued till nearly dark, and to-night, though there is no snow falling, the weather is bitterly cold and we have spent the day in Mr. Clark's snug little hut.

Here I was able to secure the first pemican I have seen on the whole trip. The time was when good pemican could be bought at every shanty at from four to six cents per lb., but now it is almost impossible to find it, and the price is from twenty-five to thirty cents per lb. For this reason travelling with dogs in the North-West is fast falling into disuse, as the cost of feeding them on pemican would amount to nearly as much as the traveller's rations.

Mr. Clark, who is something of a naturalist, has a number of very interesting fossils which he has picked up at different times along the shores of the Saskatchewan, and among them is a very pretty fossilized heart-shaped shell, filled with a hard close-grained substance very like jasper.

Aroline is, according to our calculations, 111 miles from Battleford; but Mr. Clark, who claims that his trail is 60 miles shorter from the elbow of the North Saskatchewan to Touchwood Hills than what is known as Gabriel Dumont's trail, makes the trip to Battleford only 87 miles. That it is shorter than the other trail there can be no doubt, as it strikes directly eastward from the elbow of the crossing and thence nearly due east to Touchwood, while the other trail turns nearly twenty miles north from the Elbow and crosses the South Saskatchewan about thirty-five miles further down (northward) on the stream.

IN CAMP, 131 MILES FROM BATTLEFORD, *en route* to Touchwood Hills, Nov. 14.—The mercury was frozen in the thermometer and there was a cutting wind blowing from the north-east as we set out this morning. The weather was bright and clear, and the cold pale sunlight glistening on the boundless white plain that stretched away in every direction presented a picture of ghostly splendour. Over the vast plain our small procession went crawling along like a little crooked black line. Mr. Grant-Dalton, his servant, and Peter driving the teams, and Mr. Pratt, Mr. McHugh and I riding on horseback and herding the spare ponies, among which was a large roan, for which Mr. McHugh had traded his "played-out" pony at the Crossing. The wagon wheels crunched loudly as we dragged through the hard frozen snow, and to this discordant, dismal music we marched for fully twenty miles without finding a bluff or even a clump of grey willows large enough to afford firewood or the most trifling shelter for the ponies. At last as darkness was closing in we halted in a dreary-looking shallow valley beside a frozen along, with not even a clump of willows in sight, and camped for the night. There were two or three small sticks of stove-wood in one of the waggon, and breaking up two provision boxes we managed to build fire enough in Messrs. Pratt and Grant-Dalton's stoves to make tea and thaw out bread enough for the whole party; but this little flickering blaze had burned out long before we had finished our cheerless repast, the first we had taken since breakfast.

It is almost impossible for one who has not experienced a similar situation to fully comprehend our utterly dismal condition to-night. The cold is so intense that our mercury thermometers are of no use, and in addition to this a cutting wind from the north-east is howling hungrily over this great shroud-like, treeless waste, so that it was with difficulty that we pitched our tents. The heavy Hudson Bay blankets have been damp with frost for weeks, and to-night as they were unfolded they were frozen stiff almost as stiff as the frozen tents themselves. Let one who likes sleeping in a warm room judge how much comfort he could derive from shovelling the snow from off the rough frozen ground, pitching a tent in a gale of wind with the temperature thirty-five or forty below zero, and after a half-thawed supper, wrapping himself in damp frozen blankets, and spending the night in sleeping matches of an

hour at a time, and the intervals in speculating as to whether he will be frost-bitten or not. To-night is perhaps an exceptionally bad one, but it promises to be only a little worse than many others already experienced on this same trip.

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE KYUSE AS A CAVALRY HORSE—ROUGH TRAVELLING ON THE OPEN PRAIRIE.

IN CAMP, 133 MILES FROM BATTLEFORD, *en route* to Touchwood Hills; Nov. 15.—This morning, an hour before daylight, we crawled out of our blankets in a benumbed, half-frozen condition, and, swallowing an apology for breakfast as best we could, rounded up our disconsolate-looking ponies and struck out in the teeth of a savage gale from the north-east. We had only climbed the little hill to the east of our camp, when we saw, at a distance of about two miles, a bluff of considerable size. Of course the little train was headed for this, and in half an hour we were on its western border. It was, with some difficulty, however, that a trail could be found leading into it, as there was a springy bog almost encircling it; but after some little time had been spent in explorations, a rough trail was cut into the heart of the clump, where an abundant supply of dry cottonwood, white poplar, and grey willow was found. The ponies were turned out to graze in the shelter of the timber, and in a few minutes the tents were pitched and two big camp fires were roaring in the open air. This was a vast improvement on our camp of last night, and an early, and I need not add hearty, dinner was taken by all hands. By noon the sun had come out brightly, but still the cold was nearly or quite unabated, while the moaning and swaying of the tree-tops gave evidence that the gale was still blowing from the same unpromising quarter as fiercely as ever. The sun, though dazzling in brilliancy, looked as pale and white as silver, while above, and on both right and left of it, were hung three bright rainbow-tinted sun-dogs. It was as if in a sky of the deepest and clearest blue three fragments of a brilliant rainbow had been suspended. Each showed all the rainbow tints with extraordinary distinctness, and each formed a short arc of a circle, with the concave side next the sun on the right and left, and directly above it. With such storm signals as these hung in the sky, Mr. Grant-Dalton, who was formerly a steamship captain in the East India merchant service, promptly decided not to attempt travelling farther to-day. During the afternoon the time was spent by the cooks in making preparations for the ugly journey that we know lies before us, by baking a liberal supply of bread and cooking other provisions that can with propriety be warmed up, or at least thawed out over a scanty fire, while the rest of us spent most of our

time in gathering wood and doing what we could to render our tents as comfortable as possible. When first turned out, the ponies began pawing away the snow and devouring the grass thus exposed; but after the first hour the poor creatures looked out a sheltered spot where the sun was shining brightly, and stretched themselves out in the soft, feathery snow like a pack of overwrought hounds. They had, I suppose, little or no rest last night on their bleak, shelterless range; and, assuredly, they are badly enough in need of rest at any time. In the afternoon the threatened storm came on in earnest, and then the poor beasts were quickly driven from their cosy retreat to find closer shelter in the timber, where, drawn up as if to present the smallest possible surface to the cold, they stood with their tails towards the storm, resolved, no doubt, not to move till they were compelled to do so. This severe weather makes the ponies terribly savage toward each other, and scarcely an hour passes in which there is not an ugly fight among them, from which the vanquished almost invariably retires cut and bleeding from wounds inflicted by the sharp-edged teeth of the victor. I cannot wonder that they are morose and vicious in their misery, and it seems cruel that we, their masters, have to be driving their very lives out; but we have no choice but to struggle on as best we can, for we must either push forward or perish of cold and hunger on this great snow-enwrapped, trackless waste.

This evening Mr. McHugh and I, as has been our custom since leaving Battleford, accepted the invitation of Messrs. Grant Dalton and Pratt to spend the evening in their large tent, and while there we had a general consultation as to what our future movements should be. In order that the reader may understand the question, it may be necessary to preface by a few words of explanation. After crossing the South Saskatchewan at Aroline, or what is known as the "telegraph crossing," we took a new trail made by Mr. Clark (the proprietor of the ferry), nearly due east to Touchwood Hills. This is the newest and most southerly of the trails from the South Saskatchewan to Touchwood, but away to the north of it there are two old trails which could be followed even through moderately deep snow, and south of these old trails, but north of Clark's trail runs the telegraph line. There is a scarcity of timber on all the trails in this region, but Peter knows the more southerly of the old ones (it is the one taken by the Governor-General's party when we were travelling west), and knows where the wood is to be found on it. If we continue on Clark's trail, it is evident that we shall find very little timber either for firewood or for shelter for the ponies, and we do not know where to find what little wood there is. Should we be overtaken by a stormy night on the open prairie, it is more than possible that the ponies would wander off before the storm till they reached shelter, so that a north-easterly storm, like that which is raging here to-night, would drive them down across the great plains, where we could never hope to overtake them. The reader will readily understand that if once deprived of our ponies, our situation would be utterly hopeless, and such as I do not care just now to contemplate. In addition to this, it is probable that this storm will cover up all trace of the trail we have been following, so that we might wander away from it at any

time. On the other hand, a deflection from our present course to reach Gabriel Dumont's trail will probably take us through about forty or fifty miles of country of which we know absolutely nothing, and in which we may find impassable barriers to our farther progress. Here, too, we may be caught out in shelterless camps, but as we are on the northern verge of the great treeless belt that runs across the centre of the territory, the chances of coming upon bluffs in which to camp are decidedly in our favour. Our decision is to strike out in what we suppose to be the direction of Gabriel Dumont's trail as soon as the storm abates.

To-night as I close my journal the flickering remains of our big camp-fire are casting fitful flashes of ruddy light and dusky shadows upon our little tent creating an inexpressibly gloomy effect. My blankets are still damp and half-frozen, as the storm has prevented me from even thawing them, to say nothing of drying them by the fire. Indeed the situation of our whole party is just now anything but comfortable or reassuring. The country through which we have travelled since leaving the South Saskatchewan, though devoid of timber, is apparently fine upland prairie, free from stones and having but very few aloughs.

IN CAMP, 133 MILES FROM BATTLEFORD, en route to Touchwood Hills, Nov. 16.—This morning when we turned out the storm was raging as wildly as ever, and it was soon very evident that moving forward to-day was quite out of the question. There was but little to be done to break the dreary monotony of camp life. It took but a short time to drive the shaggy ice-coated ponies into camp, and give each a handful or two of barley which was devoured eagerly, and then the poor little creatures strolled off again into the thickest part of the bush for shelter and rest. It now looks as though we might be compelled to leave our waggons here, but there is no timber in this bluff at all suitable for jumpers, and our harnesses are not fit for that class of vehicle either. If the snow continues so that we shall be compelled to abandon our waggons the only course left open to us will be to construct *trama's*, and pack what we can upon them for the remainder of the journey. This would of course render it nearly or quite impossible for us to carry any grain for the ponies, and, in their present condition it is about certain that such a deprivation would be fatal to some of them at least. Had they only performed a journey of 600 or 700 miles this season we might reasonably expect them to pull through in some sort of fashion on what they could find by pawing away the snow, but they have already done an extraordinarily heavy season's work, much heavier in fact than ought to fall to the lot of any band of horses, no matter how they are cared for, and it is this fact that makes us all somewhat distrustful of their ability to endure this terrible weather and survive the rest of the journey. Mr. McHugh's broncho, though he has had extra care and feed ever since he joined us at Battleford, and has only been used under saddle, is now unfit for work, and is running loose with the spare ponies all the time, but this only confirms me in the belief that the Montana horses are very much over-rated, and not at all equal in quality to the better class of Kyuses from the Pacific slope. The former are now too much out-

crossed with all sorts of imported animals, from thoroughbreds to Clydesdales, to be any longer characterized as a distinct breed, while the latter have been in-bred (not too closely, but wholly in-bred) for many generations. The result is that the Kyuse preserves his distinctive characteristics from one generation to another, and as they are most of them raised in large herds ranging in numbers from 500 to 5,000, the system of their development has been the survival of the fittest. At all events they are a wonderful race of ponies; and, as I believe I have stated in an earlier portion of this journal, I am very confident that colts raised on a range selected almost anywhere along the base of the Rocky Mountains between Red Deer River and the Kootenai Pass, bred from selected Kyuse mares and stout American thoroughbred stallions, would at five years old make the toughest, handiest, and in all respects the most desirable cavalry and campaigning horses that can now be found in any part of the world. They might be a trifle below the popular standard as to height, but I would back fifty animals bred and reared as I have described to carry more weight a greater distance in five, fifty or one hundred days than could any fifty horses selected out of the British or United States service, the half-bred Kyuses to allow the English or American cavalry horses an inch and a half in height. For such a journey as the present one I do not think there are any animals living that are as well adapted as Kyuses. Other horses might endure this hard usage for a few weeks or perhaps months, but that would be the limit, while such of our ponies as survive this journey, as I trust the greater part of them will, may reasonably be expected to be fit for just such another task next season.

To-night the storm is still raging, but as the temperature is falling rapidly and the barometer slowly rising there is good reason to hope that it may wear itself out before morning. If it should continue another day or two with the same fury that has characterized it to-day our escape from this isolated prairie bluff would certainly become somewhat problematical. To-night we were all talking of what we would do and how we would enjoy ourselves when we reached "civilization" again. This will doubtless appear very childish to people who have never known what it is to be for months beyond the reach of the comforts of civilized life, and whose ideas of "roughing it" are obtained from experiences in a tent pitched within half an hour's drive of a comfortable summer hotel, and where the temperature is never lower than 50 deg. above zero. Men who cannot go to sleep without a glass of hot grog for a "night-cap," and who could not fell a tree or saddle a horse without assistance, will, I have no doubt, talk very wisely and bravely about what we could or should have done in circumstances like these, and with their backs to a warm fire demonstrate most satisfactorily that "provided we kept our heads" we were running no risk at all; but whether I ever see civilisation again or not, this manuscript probably will, and just here I would say to such critics that, situated as we are, and with their alcoholic courage and strength fairly evaporated, they would find themselves the most miserable, helpless, and useless of created beings. They would learn to look with mingled emotions of respect and admiration upon the prowling coyote, who

is at least able to furnish his own transport and steal enough to keep him alive. To-night we were talking of warm, comfortable rooms, soft warm beds, good dinners, churches, theatres, concerts, of reading the news at the breakfast table with the morning paper yet moist from the press. All these things look very far away just now, and we can hardly realize that less than one month's travel may bring us to them. If it does not, our fate will be no worse than that of many an Indian and many a trader whose sad story will remain forever untold.

IN CAMP, 148 MILES FROM BATTLEFORD, en route to Touchwood Hills, November 17.—This morning before daylight we were astir, but it was a dismal task to crawl out of blankets that were frozen stiff and coated so thickly with white rime that one's hand would become wet whenever it would touch the outer covering. By the time I was dressed Peter had a big fire blazing close to the door of the tent and breakfast was ready, but the temperature was somewhere about twenty-five degrees below zero, and though the fire fairly scorched my face it was only by throwing my overcoat and a pair of blankets over my shoulders that I could keep myself at all comfortable during breakfast hour. Indeed it is very difficult to keep one's self warm when crossing the plains in such weather as this. In the backwoods of old Canada, or in any well-wooded country through which I have travelled, it is very easy to build a rude sort of shed in which to sleep and eat, and then build a monster fire in front of it; but here it takes all one's spare time to get wood enough to build even a moderately good fire, to say nothing of collecting material to be used for a shed to take the place of a tent. In Ontario or Quebec one can usually find plenty of wood that will burn well in a camp fire, even if it happens to be green; but here with only cotton-wood, white poplar, and grey willow from which to choose the traveller must either burn dry wood or none at all, as none of these light woods will burn unless they are quite dry.

About sunrise, or a little after, we set out, taking a north-easterly course, and leaving Clark's trail (or the great white plain in which we supposed it to be hidden) on our right. Peter led the way on foot carrying a compass and making as nearly as possible north-east course, then followed the three waggons leading and breaking the trail by turns, Mr. McHugh driving mine and Mr. Pratt and his servant the two belonging to his outfit, while Mr. Grant, Dalton and I, with two saddled ponies, kept the spare horses in motion. We were not able to ride much of the time, however, as the deep snow necessarily rendered the progress of the waggons very slow, and the light butting breeze from the north-west made slow riding far from enjoyable. The country through which we found our way was much rougher than that which we left to the southward, but we were fortunate enough to find no impassable barriers to our further progress. There were several high buttes and ridges, but Peter always managed to find some sort of pass along their base, or occasionally across the frozen surface of some little lake. On one occasion we were near having an accident in crossing a little lake. As the weather had been very severe, none of us were looking out for bad places in the ice, and the three waggons had gone across safely enough; but when Mr. Grant

Dalton and I came to drive the loose ponies along they crowded closely together, as they usually do when they are frightened, and when this extraordinary weight was thrown on a comparatively small portion of the surface of the ice, the water began to flow over it with alarming rapidity. The water came from a large unfrozen place only a few yards away on our right, which the bending down of the ice in the trail had caused to overflow. The crossing was effected safely, but the incident sufficed to show us how treacherous the ice on these little lakes is apt to be even in intensely cold weather. In this immediate vicinity many of the lakes appear to be fed by subterranean springs, and the ice on these can never be relied upon. Others, however, are merely shallow basins fed from the water-shed of the surrounding prairie, and these latter often freeze so that the ice is one solid mass all the way down to the mud.

The day was bright though intensely cold, but as there was very little wind we managed to drag slowly along till about three o'clock in the afternoon when in the middle of a great frozen marsh we came upon the telegraph line once more. There was no trail broken of course, but the wire served as a guide and we followed it eastward instead of keeping on any farther in a north-easterly direction. It was now nearly sunset, and we began to watch carefully for a suitable camping place. Just as the sun was sinking below the horizon the south-western sky presented a picture of inexpressible splendour. It was flushed, shading from a deep crimson to a bright rose colour more than half-way to the zenith, and perpendicularly from the sinking sun, that looked like a disc of ruddy flame, rose a broad, bright shaft of glowing crimson, that shot away up beyond the roseate flood into the dark blue sky toward the zenith. About 35 degrees away to the right and left of the setting sun rose two more ruddy pillars of fire, bright as the central one, but very much shorter. These blazing columns stood out in bright relief from the rich-coloured sunset sky, where a few saffron cloud threads intensified the brilliancy of the gorgeous picture. Just as twilight was settling down upon us we came upon a little bluff on a side hill about one hundred yards south of the telegraph line, and crossing a marsh to reach it, we came to a halt. The marsh furnished us with a liberal supply of hay for bedding, which will be extremely useful to-night, as the temperature is certainly lower than we have yet experienced it, though our frozen up thermometers are of no use in determining just how low it is. There are a number of little hills or small butes all around our camp, and these, with the little bluff in which our tents are pitched, should furnish moderately good shelter for the ponies while the forage is much better than anything we have found since the snow came. Indeed, it appears as if we had escaped the heaviest snow by our northward movement to-day. There is certainly less snow here than there was at our last camp, though we have made only about fifteen miles to-day, and travelling about as much east as north. There is not enough wood here to supply an out-of-door camp fire, so we will have to content ourselves without one, spending the evening in our neighbour's tent. It is frightfully cold turning into frozen blankets to-night, and if I mistake not, I shall sleep rather cold,

notwithstanding the fine bed of marsh hay with which we have provided ourselves. The country traversed to-day was for the most part treeless prairie, diversified only with occasional marshes, low ridges, and small buttes, with a very few bluffs of exceedingly small timber. I am under the impression that this whole region is slightly alkaline, but not sufficiently so to be at all detrimental to it as a farming country.

CHAPTER XL

HUMBOLDT AND ITS VICINITY—RECORD OF SEVERAL DAYS' JOURNEYINGS.

IN CAMP 165 MILES FROM BATTLEFORD, *en route* to Touchwood Hills, Nov. 18. This has been another dismal day's travel. I am inclined to think that there has not been an hour to-day when the temperature has been higher than 30 degrees below zero. The character of the country is very much like that traversed yesterday, being a succession of broad plains, low ridges and mounds, with occasional marshes of considerable extent. In fact the country traversed to-day must be within ten or fifteen miles of the trail over which we travelled from Humboldt to Gabriel Dumont's Crossing, when going west in the summer, and the character of the country is, I have no doubt, very much the same, having a rich soil with occasional sloughs, slightly alkaline in character. There has been very little timber in sight all day, though we managed to find shelter behind a small clump of willows, where shivering around a very scanty fire was swallowed a half-frozen dinner, and after this there were scarcely any bluffs to be seen anywhere near the trail till we reached the spot where we camped to-night. Away to the northward some twenty or perhaps thirty miles we could distinguish from the crests of the buttes what appeared to be bluffs of considerable size, but east, west, and south of us there is exceedingly little timber to be seen, and scarcely anything to break the monotony of the great boundless plain of ghostly white. The night is intensely cold, and we have barely enough wood to do our cooking in the camp stove, so that being at all comfortable is out of the question. A little before sunset, after following the telegraph line all day, we reached Gabriel Dumont's trail, and the bluff in which we are camped to-night is south of it. There are several little sloughs in the immediate vicinity of our camp, and some of these are fringed with a scanty growth of grey willow. The ponies are spending their time pawing the deep snow off the ice and eating the coarse grass that appears to preserve its verdure in these sloughs with wonderful tenacity, and as fast as they satisfy the cravings of hunger they huddle closely together in the shelter of the willows, for, though the tem-

perature appears to be falling every hour, the barometer is also going down, and a bitterly cold wind is blowing and freshening every moment from the north-east. There is not one in the camp who is not feeling considerably the worse of what we have undergone since leaving Battleford, and this frightfully cold weather and heavy travelling is becoming unendurable. We shall be fortunate if we find our ponies in the morning, as the shelter is very scanty, and I fear an ugly storm is close upon us.

HUMBOLDT, 180 MILES FROM BATTLEFORD, *en route* to Touchwood Hills, Nov. 19.—This morning the camp was early astir, and so far as I am concerned, I was exceedingly glad that morning had come. The night was one of the most disagreeable I have ever known, as I spent almost every waking moment in trying to keep myself from freezing. Time after time I woke up with a feeling of numbness in one foot or the other, an elbow, an ear, or a shoulder, or some other partially exposed portion of my body, and felt morally certain that I was frozen, but after all, though suffering with the cold intensely all night, I escaped with slight frost bites on my right ear and the right side of my nose. Though very stiff, sore, and unrefreshed, it was almost a luxury to crawl out of the frozen blankets and put on my moccasins, tunique, and great coat, and start out in search of the ponies. Though there are only eighteen in all, I found them divided up into some half dozen different groups, and it was evident that there had been a great deal of fighting during the night, as over half of them were out and bleeding. All had collected great masses of snow and ice in pawing for forage, so that their forward fetlocks looked from twenty inches to two feet in circumference, while their coats were so covered with white frost that it was almost impossible to recognise one from another by his colour. They were indeed a miserable, disconsolate looking lot, though most of them started off in the direction of the camp with considerable alacrity, expecting, of course, their customary handful of oats when they got there. Some of them, however, will, I fear, never be able to go farther than Touchwood, or Fort Ellice at farthest, and even if they reach the latter point they will not be worth wintering. By sunrise we were on our way again in much the same order as yesterday and the day before, except that Peter was again driving my team. We were scarcely on the trail before the storm increased in intensity and bitterness, till it became a regular blizzard of the first magnitude. In the face of such a storm it was almost impossible for any one to ride, and turning my saddle-pony loose with the remainder of the herd, I determined to walk to Humboldt if possible. The task was anything but an easy one, as the snow was deep and our trail led right into the teeth of the storm. We reached Humboldt about three in the afternoon, horses and men alike all but exhausted. I shall not soon forget that fifteen-mile walk.

HUMBOLDT.

On the way west with the Governor-General, I only made a stay of an hour or so at this place, and as I was exceedingly busy in preparing copy for a mail that was expected next day, I had very little time to make en-

quiries as to the character of the locality. The soil looks remarkably well, and there appears to be a fair quantity of timber, such as it is, white poplar and grey willow being the prevailing woods of course. There are very few settlers anywhere in this vicinity, and from what I can learn I fear the seasons are somewhat backward. The ground here is low lying and rather wet, and for this or some other reason what little experimenting has been done here in the direction of farming has not resulted at all satisfactorily. This year potatoes failed to ripen, and I believe nobody has experimented with grain. Humboldt is one of the meteorological stations in the North-West, but I am inclined to think that the records from this particular locality scarcely convey a correct idea as to the actual conditions of temperature, etc. Humboldt may fairly be considered on the northern edge of the great plains. What is known as the Humboldt plain stretches between it and the South Saskatchewan, while the great salt plain is only about 20 miles to the east of it, but I am very certain that the readings of the thermometer do not furnish a correct index as to the average temperature in this locality. The place at which the meteorological instruments stand is almost entirely sheltered from the wind, whether it be blowing from the north, east, or west. In fact nothing but a south-west wind could reach them with any degree of force. For example, night before last the spirit thermometer here registered 32 below zero. Our mercury thermometers were frozen solid on that same night, and Professor Kenaston, who was also on the plains with a spirit thermometer, read the temperature at 40 below zero. I should think it important, therefore that the meteorological records from Humboldt should be treated as those of a timber country rather than that of a prairie region. At the same time any person settling in this section would find comparatively little available timber country from which to select a location. It is essentially a prairie country, though it happens that the meteorological station is so placed as to give only a correct index of the climatic conditions of a well-sheltered region. There are here a telegraph operator and two or three assistants employed in keeping the line in order, besides one settler who lives only about 50 or 100 yards from the telegraph station. Here I met Mr. Scott, the registrar, Dr. Millar, N. W. M. P. Surgeon, and Mr. Smart, a trader, all on their way to Battleford. They have been nearly a month out from Brandon, so that the Canadian and American news obtained from them is not of a very late date. I had expected to be able to communicate with Toronto by telegraph on reaching this point; but unfortunately the Winnipeg end of the line is not yet working, the only available portion being that lying between Fort Pelley, Humboldt, Battleford, and Edmonton. This evening I made an attempt to procure jumpers with which to continue the journey; as further progress with my waggon appears almost impossible. I shall have to push on to Touchwood hills, however, as jumpers are not to be had here, and there is no available timber from which to make them. We were exceedingly fortunate in meeting Mr. Smart and some thirty carts of supplies which he was taking through to Battleford, as our rations had become so low that there was no chance of their lasting to Touchwood Hills. This is no place in

which to remain, or we might be tempted to stop and recruit to ourselves and our ponies, but though there is not one in the party who is not badly in need of rest, we must not think of losing even a single day till we can provide ourselves with jumpers, and be prepared for another fall of snow, which may overtake us at any time. To-night I was very strongly urged by my Battleford friends to abandon the attempt to reach home till next spring, and turn back to winter at Battleford; but I think there is still enough vitality left in me to resist still worse weather and harder times than we have yet experienced, and at all events I fail to understand why I cannot endure as much as the rest of the party can, or why I should be the first to succumb when I have every reason to push forward. As it is we shall all be off in good season to-morrow morning, as we wish to make the edge of the great Salt plain to-morrow night, and, if possible cross it the next day.

IN CAMP 200 MILES FROM BATTLEFORD, *en route* to Touchwood Hills, Nov. 20.—Though the temperature was still low this morning travelling was much more endurable than yesterday. The trail led through thick bluffs of small timber that sheltered us from the wind, and I have been able to remain in the saddle all day, so that to-night I feel very much less fatigued and miserable than I have for several days past. In my present worn-out condition tramping through the soft deep snow is most fatiguing employment, while on the other hand I can ride a pony all day without tiring myself at all, and if the weather would only continue mild enough to admit of that sort of locomotion I should have no fears about my ability to endure the trip to Touchwood Hills. Though the land we have traversed to-day would require considerable clearing to convert it into good farms, it appears to be made up of good soil, rich, and comparatively unbroken by swamps or sloughs. By our own estimate we have travelled some twenty miles to-day through what would be termed in Ontario a very lightly timbered country. We were fortunate enough to find a good camping place a short distance south of the trail where we had an almost unlimited supply of dry poplar, and, as a consequence, we have a splendid camp-fire to-night, the most cheerful I have seen for some weeks. The weather is much milder to-night, the mercury standing some 4° or 5° above zero. In short our camp, the weather, and everything about us, forcibly reminds me of many a night I have spent in the backwoods of Ontario. There is no shrilly-whistling gale from off the prairies swaying the slender tree-tops over our heads; no timber wolves howling about the camp, and even the coyotes are neglecting to furnish us with their customary serenade. To-night we ate a warm, well-cooked supper between our big, crackling camp-fire and the door of our tent, and not one of us had occasion to shiver over it, or change his seat on account of clouds of smoke and ashes being blown upon him by a restless prairie wind. This is, in fact, the first really comfortable camp we have had since reaching the South Saskatchewan. How long this satisfactory state of things will continue is, of course, more than I can tell; but even as I close my journal the camp-fire is casting an ominous flickering light upon the tent, which makes me fear

that the wind is shifting around to the most dreaded of all quarters, the north-east.

IN CAMP 210 MILES FROM BATTLEFORD, *en route* to Touchwood Hills, Nov. 21.—After a moderately comfortable night's rest we were ready to start before sunrise this morning, determined, if possible, by driving hard all day and late at night to reach the eastern edge of the great salt plain before going into camp for the night. This meant a drive of about 42 miles, which we knew would be a very severe tax upon our ponies, but as the great plain has no suitable camping place for a stretch of 32 miles or more, we had either to drive only ten miles to-day or accomplish the whole distance. As we climbed the little hill to the east of the camp, as our train wound slowly out upon the trail, we all paused for a few moments to watch as glorious a sunrise as I have ever seen in the North-West or anywhere else. Next the horizon lay a zone of translucent lemon-gold, and above this hung a bright flaming cloud-curtain whose lower edge was looped up in festoons edged with orange and gold. Though beautiful, this sunrise was an ominous one, and in less than half an hour later the sun was concealed behind dark drifting masses of angry-looking storm clouds. After driving ten miles we found ourselves on the verge of the great treeless alkaline plain, and we came to a halt for the purpose of discussing the advisability of camping for the day. It was now nearly ten o'clock, and we had already taken considerable out of the ponies. The question to be decided was whether we could reach the farther edge of the plain without killing, or at all events ruining, some of our best animals. We had also to consider the possibility of having the storm, that was already threatening us, burst upon us in the middle of the great white plain that lay stretched out before us, an event which, in all probability, would result in our losing at least a portion of our spare ponies, while it would be quite within the range of possibility that we ourselves might lose the trail in the storm, and, perhaps, fail to find it for days. Peter, who has been in a great hurry to get home for the past week or two, was very much disinclined to attempt the crossing of the plain to-day, and as there were at least three more of our number inclined to think he was right, we were not long in deciding to camp in the little clump of grey willows beside us for the remainder of the day. As soon as the tents were pitched all hands turned out in search of fuel, and, though there was no large timber anywhere in sight, we had in the course of three or four hours collected, by our united efforts, enough of dead and dry grey willow to supply the camp stove for at least twenty-four hours.

Our resolution to remain here was undoubtedly well taken, for by three o'clock this afternoon one of the wildest prairie storms that I ever witnessed broke upon us from the north-east. To-night it continues with unabated fury. The snow is falling rapidly, but it is the tremendous gale that accompanies it with such force as to almost take one's breath away that constitutes the most startling feature of the storm. Our little train could never have made headway against such a storm as this, and we are heartily thankful for even the scanty shelter that the willows afford us to-night.

IN CAMP, 242 MILES FROM BATTLEFORD, *en route* to Touchwood Hills, November 22.—This morning when we turned out we were not sorry to find that the wind, though blowing briskly, had swung around to the west, and that there was no longer any snow falling. We hurried out of camp as rapidly as possible, and for the first time since leaving Calgary I took charge of my own waggon, leaving Peter to assist in herding the loose ponies. On getting out upon the trail we found that the fierce gale of last night had swept it almost bare, and the waggons bowled along over the smooth frozen ground at a pace that was decidedly exhilarating. Half-an-hour after sunrise, however, we saw that another storm was brewing. The sun was intensely bright, but as white as polished silver, while between it and the horizon stood a shaft of white light, scarcely less dazzling than the sun itself. On right and left hung two brilliant rainbow-coloured sundogs, while in the west angry masses of storm-cloud were rolling swiftly up from the horizon. In less than an hour we were overtaken by a furious prairie snow-storm, which beat savagely upon us all day, but it did little or nothing towards checking our progress, as it was directly in our backs. About one o'clock we halted for noon at what are known as the Strawberry bushes, the only winter camping place on the great salt plain.

Hitherto I have had but little to say about our noonday camps, and indeed since the advent of cold weather they have not constituted very cheerful topics either to write or think about. As our noon-camp to-day, however, may be regarded as a representative one, I will give the reader an idea as to its character. The spot selected was on the west side of a small clump of stunted bushes not more than four or five feet high and growing sparsely at that. Just to the south was a large slough or pond, whose frozen surface had been swept smooth by the ever-restless winds that all winter are howling over this great dreary waste. Having selected our camping-place, the waggons were drawn up so as to supplement as far as possible the scanty shelter afforded by the bushes, and then the ponies were unharnessed and turned out to graze as best they could where the grass was for the most part covered with some fifteen to eighteen inches of snow. The small supply of wood that we carried from last night's camp was taken from the waggons, and in a very few minutes a little camp-fire of the most limited dimensions was struggling feebly for an existence which the storm from the west was inclined to deny to it. In time, however, the water in the camp-kettles was boiling, and by the time we had fed the ponies a handful of grain each on the ice of the neighbouring slough, our dinner such as it was, was ready. Shivering with the cold, and standing with our backs to the wind and our faces to the miserable little fire, we hastily swallowed as much half-thawed provisions as we thought would be necessary to keep us from suffering with hunger till supper-time, but I do not believe one in the disconsolate little group about the fire ate with any other intent than that of merely performing a disagreeable task, which he considered absolutely necessary to his well-being. I have often heard people talk of the excellent appetites they always had when "roughing it," and I have often imagined myself that the more severely I

should be exposed the more ravenous would become my appetite. My experience of the past week or two, however, has entirely upset this theory. The cases in which I have eaten my meals with a relish since leaving the South Saskatchewan have been altogether exceptional. True, I have eaten heartily for the greater part of the time, but I have done so not to satisfy any cravings of hunger, but simply because I felt very sure that the great waste of vital energy incident to strong exercise and protracted resistance to intense cold must be repaired in some way. Indeed I do not think that there is one in our party who has not systematically pursued the policy of eating regularly and heartily whether enjoying his meals or not, and I am very certain that these meals taken at our noon-camps have been conducive of much more suffering from cold than could possibly be atoned for by warm dinners, however good, to say nothing of hastily swallowed half-frozen rations.

In the afternoon the travelling was heavy in places owing to the deep snow but the wind had swept much of the trail nearly bare, so that excepting in occasional drifts the waggons ran very easily. As the general character of the Salt Plain (which is really an alkaline flat traversed by two or three broad marshes and low ridges) was described in one of my letters from this region last summer, it is not necessary to add anything to what was then said. To-day as we hurried across, with the wildest of prairie storms howling around us, the scene was an indescribably dreary one, a very type of utter desolation. As the gale was at our backs, however, we did not suffer much inconvenience from it as long as we were in motion.

Darkness was fast settling down upon us as we crossed the eastern edge of the plain and the extreme western limit of Touchwood Hills. We were not long in finding a good camping place, where there was plenty of dry white poplar and cottonwood, and in a very short time the ponies were turned out, the tents pitched, and a good camp-fire burning. Everybody is in high spirits to-night, as even the worst kind of a storm cannot now prevent us from reaching the Touchwood Hills settlements, where we can be sure of securing jumpers for the remainder of the journey. The distance from here to the Indian Farm cannot be more than about thirteen miles, and twelve miles beyond that point are the mail station and the Hudson Bay Company's post, while for the whole distance the trail leads through a well-wooded country where we shall have no lack of firewood or forage and shelter for the ponies, even should we be delayed by exceptionally stormy weather. Our prospects to-night are certainly vastly better than they were twenty-four hours ago, and it now looks as though these long days and nights of misery were drawing toward a close. We have made fully thirty-two miles to-day and though the ponies are of course somewhat tired I do not think any of them are seriously the worse of the drive. Once rid of these heavy waggons we can push through the snow much more rapidly with jumpers, and at the same time have no difficulty in keeping ourselves warm and comfortable while riding.

CHAPTER XLI

TOUCHWOOD HILLS—A FERTILE REGION—STARTING FOR FORT ELLIOT.

INDIAN FARM, TOUCHWOOD HILLS, 255 MILES FROM BATTEFORD, Nov. 23.—We were in no particular hurry about getting out of camp this morning, as the ponies required all the rest they could get after the severe drive of yesterday. We were on our way about half-past eight o'clock, and driving till a little after one in the afternoon, reached the Indian Instructor's farm-house, where I have decided to remain long enough to secure jumpers, if possible, for the rest of the trip, as the deep snow makes the hauling of the waggons exceedingly heavy. The country through which we have passed to-day is a succession of small, fairly-timbered hills, and the region is known as The Little Touchwood Hills. These hills called "little" to distinguish them from a small range of mountains to the northward, which are known as Big Touchwood Hills, constitute one of the finest and most diversified bits of scenery one meets with in travelling over the plains. There are no broad flats or any extensive stretches of open prairie. Here and there a hill-side is bare, but as a rule these hills are very fairly wooded with white poplar, cotton wood, grey willow, and occasionally a little birch, the latter being very scarce, however. As the country in this neighbourhood is very much cut up with abrupt little hills and valleys, it is not well calculated for grain farming on a very large scale, as a farmer would seldom have an opportunity of laying out more than ten acres in a single field, while if he took the land as it came there would be many more fields less than five acres in dimensions than those exceeding that limit. For settlers desiring to farm in a small way, I should imagine Touchwood Hills presented a very good opening. The soil is good, being mostly a rich, though somewhat gravelly, loam. It is for the most part very easily drained, and being mostly upland, could, I should imagine, be worked very early in the spring. Forage is excellent, and shelter for cattle and horses abundant, while the settler would have no difficulty in securing all the logs he would want for building purposes, and all the fuel he would require for generations to come. In my western trip last summer it will be remembered that I only skirted through the south-west corner of Touchwood Hills, and saw almost nothing of the settlement excepting the Church of England Mission. This time I have passed directly into the settlement by the regular Edmonton trail, and shall consequently be able to give the reader my impressions regarding the whole region before I have done with the subject. The Indian farm at which I am located is in charge of the Indian Department Instructor for five reserves in this neighbourhood. The Instructor, Mr. Gilbert McConnell, only arrived here last summer, but since then he has been working with a will, and now has the farm and premises in

first-class condition. He has at present only thirty-five acres under cultivation, of which five acres are sown in wheat, eleven in barley, nine in oats, three in turnips, one in potatoes, one in carrots, besides a large kitchen-garden of half an acre. The crops have not been very large, but are harvested in good condition. The wheat averaged about fifteen bushels to the acre, the barley twenty-five bushels to the acre, oats twenty bushels to the acre, turnips two hundred and thirty bushels to the acre, potatoes one hundred and thirty bushels to the acre, carrots one hundred bushels to the acre. Mr. McConnell, as has been already stated, has under his care five reserves, four of them being in Touchwood Hills, and one at Nut Lake, ninety miles northward. They are all occupied by Cree Indians. On these reserves combined there are 160 acres broken; sixteen acres of potatoes have yielded 75 bushels to the acre; sixty acres of wheat have yielded from fifteen to twenty bushels to the acre; forty-seven acres of barley have yielded twenty bushels to the acre, the remainder of the broken land being roots, including 800 bushels of turnips, the latter being a very popular article of food with the Indians throughout the North-West. The combined population of these reserves would be between seven and eight hundred. Mr. McConnell tells me that all his pupils are taking a very active interest in farming, and though many of them are necessarily awkward and slow about learning, he has confidence in ultimately succeeding in making moderately good settlers of nearly all of them, though, of course, generations will have to pass away before the Indian can become as good a farmer as the average white settler. Mr. McConnell gives Indians who work small rations, if they need them, for their families, but those who don't work never receive a mouthful of food from the Home farm. The Indians appear to be all in good spirits, are thoroughly satisfied with the progress they are making in farming, and look upon agriculture as the future employment of their race. Since he was placed in charge of this farm, last summer, Mr. McConnell and his assistants have put up an excellent farm-house, which, though not extravagant or costly, is well calculated to make the red man appreciate the value of industry and perseverance. Many of them are now putting up good log houses for themselves, and there is every reason to hope that in a few years the Indians of Touchwood Hills and Nut Lake will be a little more than barely self-supporting.

Touchwood Hills, it will be remembered, lie about fifty miles north of the Hudson Bay and Mounted Police Posts in the Qu'Appelle valley, and the two regions are apt to be spoken of in connection with one another. The people in the two settlements regard each other as neighbours, and visit each other's families just as people situated four or five miles apart in Ontario would do. When I arrived here this afternoon I found Mr. Thomas Kavanagh, a wealthy settler from Qu'Appelle, just finishing the threshing for the Indian Farm, and from him I was enabled to obtain some information regarding the crops at Qu'Appelle, which were being harvested when I passed up last summer. Mr. Kavanagh is, I believe, the only farmer in this part of the country who has a threshing machine, and this year his ten-horse thresher passed through it nearly all the grain crops in the Qu'Appelle Valley. He himself has forty

acres broken, twenty of which were under crops of barley, wheat, oats and roots. This year the average yield of wheat in the Qu'Appelle Valley was thirty-five bushels to the acre. Barley averaged thirty to forty bushels per acre; oats, sixty bushels to the acre; potatoes, 250 bushels to the acre. Mr. La Roche, whose wheat was just ready to harvest when I passed westward, about the middle of last August, cleaned up 120 bushels of beautiful wheat for five bushels sown, and Mr. Kavanagh assures me that Mr. La Roche's crops were not in any way superior to the average to be found in the Qu'Appelle Valley. This evening I made arrangements to dispose of my waggon and harness and purchase two jumpers and two single sets of shagnappy harness, with which to continue the journey. As neither jumpers nor harness are in perfect order, however, I shall have to remain the whole of to-morrow to have the necessary repairs made. This is by no means a good place in which to purchase jumpers, as suitable timber for their manufacture is very scarce, and as it is on the main trail between Winnipeg and Battleford, many of the westward-bound freighters have already left their carts here and supplied themselves with jumpers, so that those who have any left are inclined to ask fancy prices for them. This evening I paid \$10 for a jumper that will not bring ten cents at the end of the railway, and \$9 for a set of shagnappy harness little, if any, more valuable than the jumper. The other jumper and harness are less pretentious, much less expensive, and about equally valuable, inasmuch as they will answer the purposes of my journey, and that is all I can expect from them. The air is keen and frosty to-night, but there is every appearance of settled weather.

NOLIN'S STATION, TOUCHWOOD HILLS, 270 MILES FROM BATTLEFORD, NOV. 25.—Yesterday was spent in completing my arrangements for the journey to Fort Ellice, a distance of some 150 miles or more, and it was not until the forenoon was well advanced that I managed to get away from the Indian Farm. As a consequence I have only made about fourteen miles to-day, being now camped at Nolin's Station, the last stopping place in the Touchwood Hills settlement. I have enjoyed the drive to-day very much, and if the weather only continues favourable I trust the remainder of the trip will turn out to be extremely pleasant. As some of my readers may not understand just what a jumper is, I may be excused for giving a short explanation as to its character. Indeed, the jumpers in the North-West differ very considerably from those usually seen in the backwoods of Ontario, the former being very little larger than a fair-sized hand-sleigh, and made on precisely the same principle. The shafts of the jumper are coupled with one cross-bar and attached by means of short strips of shagnappy or rawhide to the forward knee on either side. The manner of attaching these shafts is a little peculiar. The end of the shaft projects beyond the hole through which the rawhide runs, and is so bevelled as to run along on the snow either inside or outside the runner, according to the width of the shafts. In this way a jumper will ride over a log without any special strain, as the shafts act as a sort of lever and inclined plane in raising the forward end, instead of giving a dead pull against the curve of the runner, as they would if attached in the

ordinary way. The harness, which is made of rawhide or shagnappy, is precisely the same as a light cart harness, having wooden hames padded with linen, and closing at the top by means of a rawhide loop. Rope lines are usually used, and now, and indeed ever since the weather became so extremely cold, I have given up using bits in the ponies' mouths, simply fastening the reins into the halters and guiding them in that way. Each of the jumpers is furnished with moderately high stakes and a low box of rough boards. Into these boxes we have packed the load from the now abandoned waggon, each jumper taking half, and one being driven by Peter and the other by myself. Of course our tent and bedding make up a considerable share of the load, and as these can be used for wraps, it has not been at all difficult to arrange a very comfortable seat in each jumper. By this arrangement Peter takes two of the ponies to use in his jumper, leaving me the other two, one of which I drive in the forenoon and the other in the afternoon. As these little sleighs are only a few inches above the snow, it is almost a luxurious sensation to be covered up to the chin in warm wraps, and, in an almost recumbent posture, glide smoothly along over the snow, instead of jolting and bumping on the waggon, where one is exposed to an almost unendurable degree of cold. Since arriving here, where I may be said to be in the eastern extremity of the Touchwood Hills settlement, I have been enabled to pick up some further information concerning the Touchwood Hills region.

As this settlement is a convenient stopping place, 150 miles from the head of navigation on the Assiniboine at Fort Ellice, a very fair business is done in winter and summer by both farmers and traders. Travellers, as a rule, come around by the way of Qu'Appelle, which is the longer road by about fifty miles, but freighters and others, whose sole object is to make the quickest possible time between Battleford and Winnipeg, take the road which we purpose pursuing straight across Pheasant Plains to Fort Ellice. I was not a little surprised to find that one of the traders here, Mr. Heubach, formerly of Montreal, had imported a finely-bred trotting stallion Crown Prince, by John E. Rysdyk out of Doll by old Royal George. He is a very handsome, solid-coloured horse, fashionably bred, fast, and stylish enough for any gentleman's carriage.

At Mr. Nolin's I met one of the census enumerators, Mr. Garneau, who had been busy through the country north of this region. I found him enthusiastic on the agricultural prospects of the North-West, and like every other well-informed traveller whom I have met, he has found almost limitless areas of agricultural land wherever he has gone. About twenty miles due north of the point where we now are is a place called Quill Plain, where there are as yet no settlers. It is about seventy-five miles long by about twenty-five miles wide, made up of choice farming land, and bordered on both sides with an abundance of excellent timber. There are also scattering bluffs throughout the plain where firewood and building material might be found, but Mr. Garneau describes the belts of timber bordering the plain as practically inexhaustible for home consumption.

Round Plains are about eight miles north of where we now are, and located among what are known as the Big Touchwood Hills. This is a succession of plains, in all about seventy miles long and eight miles wide. Here, too, the land is exceedingly rich, and almost unbroken by sloughs or marshes, while there is plenty of excellent timber on both north and south borders. At Round Plains there are now some ten or twelve settlers who are doing well. At Long Lake, which is about forty miles west of Qu' Appelle, and eighty or ninety south-west of this point, there is comparatively little timber, but an excellent quality of land, and in fact the region is said to be one of the most beautiful in the whole North-West.

Carrot River, another place visited by Mr. Garneau, is described by all who have seen it as possessing a phenomenally rich soil, in which wild pea vine grows as high as a man's head, and other vegetation is proportionately rich. There are about twenty families now settled at Carrot River (or Root River as it is called on the map), but from the very favourable reports that I have heard everywhere concerning it I am inclined to think that it is a region that will rapidly find favour with settlers next year. It lies about twenty miles north of Prince Albert. Its proximity to the Saskatchewan and the thriving village of Prince Albert is a sufficient guarantee that produce grown there can be easily disposed of, and there is every reason to believe that when the new system of steamboat management shall have been inaugurated on the Saskatchewan next summer it will make traffic on that great stream much more active than it has ever been before. Indeed, I am of opinion that before another year has passed the general prospects of all points along the North Saskatchewan from Prince Albert to Edmonton will be greatly improved by the increased facilities furnished by the new steamboat management.

As I have often heard the question asked, How came "Touchwood Hills" to be so named? I have at different times enquired of traders who have spent nearly or quite all of their lives in the North-West. Though all the stories concerning the origin of the name do not agree, the best authenticated and, I think, the most reasonable, explanation is the following:—"Before the Indians had matches brought among them by the traders and, when they were accustomed to the flint and steel, "touchwood," or "punk," as it is called in many parts of Ontario, was in great demand, and in the North-West, where timber is comparatively scarce, it was often with great difficulty that it could be procured. Those who have sought for it, even in the well-timbered regions of Ontario, have often experienced some difficulty in finding it. It is produced by a sort of dry rot that usually sets in while the tree is standing, and this dry rot which converts the timber into punk or touchwood progresses very slowly. In the prairie bluffs, which are occasionally swept by prairie fires, this peculiar kind of decomposition which produces touchwood never has time to develop itself, but in these hills that are seldom reached by these devastating fires, and where timber has been allowed to grow for many decades, and where the short-lived poplar and cottonwood are the prevailing woods, the conditions were highly favourable for the production of touchwood, and here the red men have always been able to find it in abundance.

Indeed, I have been told that even now Indians occasionally come here from places hundreds of miles away for the sole purpose of procuring touchwood, which in addition to its value as a combustible, is supposed by them to possess certain highly-prized medicinal properties when worn in charms or necklaces.

The weather has moderated very much since sunset, and I fear that a thaw, or possibly a rain storm, may not be far off.

CHAPTER XLII

FROM TOUCHWOOD HILLS TO FORT ELLICE—ARRIVAL AT WOLVERINE HILL—MISCHIEVOUS CHANGES IN NORTH-WEST NOMENCLATURE.

IN CAMP, FIVE MILES EAST OF TOUCHWOOD HILLS, *en route* to Fort Ellice, Nov. 26.—This morning when we turned out the weather had become unusually warm, rain was falling at intervals, the wind was blowing from the south, and, in short, appearances were decidedly in favour of a general breaking up of the sleighing, now that we were just fairly prepared for it. It continued so showery during the forenoon that I found it impossible to leave Nolin's till after dinner, when the rain ceased though the weather was still warm and foggy. On getting out on the trail once more it did not take me long to discover that the sleighing was seriously impaired by the thaw which had set in, and that two more days of such weather at farthest would be certain to utterly use up the sleighing. Even this afternoon the jumper dragged heavily occasionally as it cut through the slush and down into the mud. Our loads are not very heavy, however, and we reached our present camp by four o'clock in the afternoon. Here we found Messrs. Pratt and Grant-Dalton in camp, and deciding to wait and go on in company with them in the morning. I turned my ponies out to feed. Mr. McHugh secured a jumper and harness at Touchwood Hills, but he has now with him only the large roan pony for which he traded at South Saskatchewan, his broncho having become so completely played out that he despaired of bringing him through to Fort Ellice, even though allowed to run light all the time. He accordingly sold him at Touchwood Hills, and decided to make the remainder of the journey with one pony. Messrs. Pratt and Grant-Dalton were unable to get more than one jumper at Touchwood Hills, and are, therefore bringing both their waggons along as well as the jumper, which they use chiefly for carrying grain. At present it is impossible for me to say which outfit stands the best chance of making good time to Fort Ellice. Should the weather turn cold and another snowstorm come on, my neighbours would be much worse off than I am, as

they would find the hauling of their waggons through the snow between here and Fort Ellice very slow work. On the other hand, however, if the thaw should continue all day to-morrow I fear I should have to resort to travois with which to finish the journey.

IN CAMP, 25 MILES FROM TOUCHWOOD HILLS, *en route* to Fort Ellice, Nov. 27.—The weather, though cooler this morning, was still not quite such as I would like to have seen. For all that, however, we made tolerably fair progress, and I think that my ponies are standing the work with the jumpers quite as well as those of my fellow-travellers with their waggons. We have made twenty miles to-day through what appears to be an excellent quality of rolling prairie, partially overgrown with bluffs of small timber, and having occasional groves or strips of poplar and cottonwood of considerable size. Sleighing is certainly not any worse than it was yesterday, and there is every appearance of cooler weather to come. I find travelling with jumpers not at all fatiguing, and instead of looking forward as I used to do, with pleasure to the prospect of turning into camp at night, I now begin to dread it. Our tents are pitched to-night in a clump of timber south of the trail, where there is plenty of dry wood. We have a cheerful camp-fire outside the tent, and all-in-all the camp is an exceptionally comfortable one.

IN CAMP, 50 MILES FROM TOUCHWOOD HILLS, *en route* to Fort Ellice, Nov. 28.—Last night there was a very light fall of snow and one of the most remarkable white frosts of which I have ever seen the traces. The trees, branches, and twigs are all thickly coated with a pure white rime, which even wrapped its heavy silver armour over the tall blades of grass that had reared their heads above the snow. As we made our way along the trail to-day, and were approaching Pheasant Plains, we found ourselves getting into a country where the snow is much deeper than in Touchwood Hills, and it is with considerable difficulty that our neighbours are keeping up with us, while the travelling with our jumpers has been comparatively easy. We have made about twenty-five miles to-day, and the ponies finished their work almost as fresh as they began it. The country through which we have travelled is very much the same as that traversed yesterday. Here and there the country is broken with sloughs and lakelets, but it is for the most part fine rolling land lightly timbered. The forage is good all along the trail, and from the extraordinary growth of grass which stands up and asserts itself strongly above nine to fifteen inches of snow, I should imagine the soil must be exceptionally rich. Wherever we stop, the ponies invariably begin pawing and feeding just where they are turned out of the harness. They lose no time in looking for grass, as they appear to think it good enough for them anywhere along the trail. I have never heard this region very highly extolled as a favourable locality for settlement, but I should imagine that a farmer accustomed to the average farming land to be found in Ontario would imagine himself in an agricultural paradise could he be blindfolded at home and set down here before the wrapping was taken off his eyes. If he came up here in the ordinary way he would learn by the time he got here to be as fault-finding and

dissatisfied with the country as are the half-breeds and old settlers in Manitoba and the North-West. The average half-breed thinks that land is not worth cultivating provided it ever requires manure, and as a consequence he objects to anything except the heavy black loams of the river bottoms, which are not as adaptable for agricultural purposes in a cold climate like that of the North-West as are the uplands where the soil is lighter, but where the crops are less apt to be visited by summer frosts, and where the land can be ploughed earlier in the spring without the danger of having the crop drowned out by spring rains or June floods. Indeed, I am of opinion that there will yet be a general revolution in the sentiments of North-West settlers concerning the relative values of light uplands and heavy bottoms. In some sections of the North-West the land has been condemned because it is thought it would require manure as often as once in five years, but I have invariably noticed that the farmers who are doing best and making most money everywhere throughout the North-West territory are located on what would here be termed light soil, but what would be considered by any intelligent farmer in Ontario a rich sandy loam. But the character of the soil is not the only thing with which the settler in the North-West is apt to find fault. If he finds himself in a position to take up a whole section of unbroken, treeless prairie of the very best of soil he objects to it on account of the lack of timber. If it contains numerous bluffs he characterizes it as "broken" land for the simple reason that he cannot plough furrows half a mile long until he has expended some money or labour in clearing off intervening bluffs of timber, even though he well knows that it would furnish him valuable material for fences and outbuildings. If there is a good-sized slough or a marshy stream running across his location he will object to that; but if it is destitute of water he is quite as ready to find fault, never thinking, apparently, that the cost of sinking one or two wells in the soft prairie soil would be the merest trifle. Of course, I do not mean to say that all the farmers who come to the North-West, or indeed a greater share of them, are grumblers; but where there is so much choice land from which to take a selection, and where a man, by looking about him a short time, can find almost anything he wants in the way of rich agricultural land, the settler becomes extremely fastidious. He will in time no doubt select a good location, but if asked concerning the merits of the country through which he had passed, and where he had failed to find precisely what he wanted, he would be apt to condemn it as useless country simply because it did not quite come up to his idea of what a prairie farm should be. It will thus be seen that individual opinions concerning the North-West are apt to be greatly diversified, and though all mean to represent the real facts of the case, very many will come far short of doing so, for the reason that in speaking of North-West land to farmers in Ontario, they compare them with other sections in the North-West, rather than with agricultural land in Ontario, which is perhaps the only kind with which the listener is familiar.

The country through which we travelled to-day is, I think, all made up of rich land well adapted for agricultural purposes, but at the same time it is

far from being up to the standard that would be most sought after by settlers coming into this country. This evening the sun went down in a flush of rosy light, and as the ruddy sunset tints lit up the snow, and touched every frost-armoured branch, twig, leaf, and bending blade of grass, the picture was such as would make the beholder imagine that he had been suddenly transported to fairyland. Our camp to-night is, according to Peter's calculation, not more than about six miles from Big Pheasant Plain. The forage is very good, but dry wood is exceedingly scarce, and it was as late as ten or half-past ten o'clock before we had collected enough to cook supper in the camp stove, to say nothing of a fire outside, which was, of course, not thought of. The weather has been turning gradually colder to-day, and to-night the mercury stands 8 or 9 below zero and the temperature is still falling.

IN CAMP, 82 MILES FROM TOUCHWOOD HILLS, en route to Fort Ellice. Nov. 29.—This morning the mercury in the thermometer was frozen up again. There was a heavy fog, a light breeze in the north, and occasional flurries of snow. On harnessing the ponies this morning we discovered that one of my best ponies, Jim, had received such a severe kick on one of his hind legs, just above the gambrel joint, that it would be impossible to use him, and I even had my doubts if he would be able to keep up with the loose ponies. As he was one of the pair driven by Peter, and as his mate was not able to do the whole day's journey, I was obliged to turn Blanche over to Peter and drive the ever-reliable Punch throughout the whole day. I need hardly add that although this pony has already done considerably over 2,000 miles driving since last June, he did his work to-day just as cheerfully and willingly as he did the first day I owned him. The travelling to-day was very heavy, Pheasant Plain being thickly covered with snow, and the trail, of course, entirely unbroken. We drew away from Messrs. Pratt and Grant-Dalton early in the morning, and when we camped for noon they were nowhere in sight. Shortly after we left our noon camp, however, we sighted them some three miles behind us on the open prairie, and to-night, after having crossed a dismal stretch of treeless plain, we reached camp just as twilight was deepening into darkness. An hour and a half later they were with us, but still no fire could be started, for as yet our searches for firewood had been fruitless. There were bluffs on every side of us for miles in every direction but one, and yet it was half-past twelve o'clock before we could find dry wood enough to make a respectable fire in the stove. It was dreary work wandering about among these bluffs, each taking a different direction and searching for fuel. The young moon was sailing through thick curling masses of coppery-bronze clouds, now breaking out with a flood of pure silvery light, and now almost lost in the heavy billowy masses through which she was rapidly ploughing. When at last we had finished our search for wood the question of pitching my tent was the next that presented itself. I had neglected to provide myself with iron tent pegs, without which no one should travel during the winter, and on attempting to drive the oak ones, it was found that they would break and broom up rather than enter the frozen ground. The result is that we

shall spread our blankets on the snow in the lee of a thick bluff, and sleep with naught but the starry canopy above us.

IN CAMP, 112 MILES FROM TOUCHWOOD HILLS, *en route* to Fort Ellice, Nov. 30.—It was scarcely daybreak when we left camp this morning, and finding that it was impossible to keep up to us with their waggons, Mr. Pratt and Mr. Grant-Dalton decided to make no further effort in that direction. Accordingly Mr. McHugh, Peter, and I left camp before they had rounded up their ponies for a start. We were half an hour on the way before the sun rose over little Pheasant Plain in a blaze of ruddy light, while in the south-western sky was to be seen that peculiarly fresh, breezy effect of little dove-coloured cloud islets, floating in a sea of pale malachite green, which one often sees when the sun is rising over some broad lake whose farther shores are below the horizon. Our journey to-day was, for the most part, through rather open prairie, furnished with scattering bluffs of small timber. The travelling was heavy, but we made fine progress, having covered certainly not less than thirty miles to-day. About sunset we were examining the bluffs in order to find a good camp if possible, but it was after dark before we reached one where dry wood was at all plentiful. We are now fairly sheltered by the timber, and have a good fire blazing in front of us. By means of some green poles we have fixed up a sort of frame over which we have thrown the tent, so as to make a shed fronting towards the fire, and our prospects for a comfortable night's rest are not at all bad.

IN CAMP, WOLVERINE HILL, *en route* from Touchwood Hills to Fort Ellice, Dec. 1.—It was intensely cold when we turned out of camp this morning, and we had rather a dreary time in getting ready for a start, but once on the trail we glided along comfortably and pleasantly through fine prairie uplands until noon, when we drove down into the big valley of what is known on the maps as Cut Arm Creek. The banks are very precipitous, and somewhere about 180 or 200 feet high. This creek, as I have already remarked, is called Cut Arm Creek on the map. The half-breeds and the guides in this region all know it as "Broken Arm Creek." The name was given to it by the Indians, and the cause of its receiving this somewhat singular name is that an Indian, in riding down into this valley one day, fell from his horse and broke his arm. The name of "Cut Arm" was probably given to it by some conceited individual who imagined his knowledge of Cree to be much better than it really was. It is a pity, however, that nomenclature throughout the North-West should have to be so far entrusted to ignorant Government officials, who are too conceited to consult old settlers, half-breeds, or competent interpreters. This is only a sample of the abominable bungling that has been committed in naming hills, creeks, lakes, and rivers throughout the North and North-West of Canada. In taking the canoe-route from Thunder Bay to Winnipeg the traveller can if he chooses pass through no less than four Hawk Lakes, while Vermilion Rivers may be found in abundance all the way from Lake Superior to Edmonton. There are also five or six Vermilion Lakes, two or three Vermilion Bays, fifty or sixty Beaver Creeks, and Mud

Lakes innumerable. After dinner we crossed a broad stretch of muskeg, probably not less than five miles in width, and finally came to camp at Wolverine Hill, or, as it has been called on the maps, "Spy Hill." Here is another outrage in the way of stupid nomenclature. There are a number of small hills in this vicinity, and one very large one. On the summit of the latter is an Indian flagstaff, erected to mark the spot where many years ago an old man, called the Wolverine, killed himself. To this day it is not known whether he shot himself accidentally or whether it was a case of deliberate suicide. At all events, the Indians called the hill after him, and until the wise men at Ottawa published maps, nobody ever thought of the place by any other name. By these *savants*, however, a group of hills in the neighbourhood was named "Wolverine Hills," and the original Wolverine Hill re-christened "Spy Hill." Besides being a stupid innovation, this is a mischievous one, for away down on the plains south-west of Battleford there is a hill that has long been known to the Indians and guides as "Spy Hill," or, rather, two or three buttes which were known as the "Spy Hills." A traveller coming into this country and consulting the maps would be almost sure to get the two localities confounded. If, for example, he desired to visit Spy Hill, any experienced guide would conclude at once that he meant the locality beyond Battleford, for as a rule guides pay very little attention to published maps.

Our camp to-night is in a thick bluff where the undergrowth is so abundant that we had to chop away a portion of it before we could get room to spread our blankets and make other preparations for camp. We have a huge fire burning at our feet, but even this hardly suffices to make us comfortable, as the night is intensely cold, the frozen mercury giving no indication as to how low the temperature, really is, but I am strongly inclined to think that it must be at least forty degrees below zero. Camping out in such a temperature as this is, under the best of circumstances, a frightful tax on one's vital energies. This, I trust, will be our last out-of-doors camp, as we hope to reach Fort Ellice to-morrow, and I am not at all sorry that the most tedious, and by all odds the roughest, part of the journey is now at an end. I cannot help feeling some regret, however, at parting with my ponies. They have come to know me, and I have been so long with them, and passed through so many trials and such a long, dreary journey in their company, that I cannot help looking upon them as old and well-tried friends. For many a day and many a mile they have been all that have stood between me and a fate too miserable to contemplate, and now that our companionship is fast drawing to a close I could wish that some better fate were in store for them than that of falling into the hands of cruel, irrational, and merciless masters, such as, I am sorry to say, nine-tenths of the half-breed freighters are. As I close my journal to-night, and bid a long farewell to camp life, and what I think I may justly characterize as genuine "roughing it," the starlight is blending with the flickering ruddy flush of a camp-fire upon my note book. I hear the muffled clinking of Punch's bell in the thick underbrush a hundred yards from camp, while from away out of

the open prairie to the northward comes the long-drawn, dismal howl of the timber-wolf. I am not sorry to bid farewell to this kind of life for a while at least, but at the same time there is a fascination about it that is quite inexplicable until one has experienced it.

CHAPTER XLIII.

FROM FORT ELLICE TO BRANDON—THE LAND BOOM AT BRANDON—IMPORTANCE OF A STRICT PROHIBITORY LIQUOR LAW.

FORT ELLICE, Dec. 2. — We arrived here early in the afternoon, or rather Mr. McHugh and I arrived, leaving Peter to drive one of the ponies to his own house, which is some mile and a half or more off the trail, and on a side-road which branches off the main trail two or three miles from this point. Indeed, since arriving here I am very glad that I permitted the poor fellow to go home as soon as possible, for the Hudson Bay Company officials inform me that his young wife has been exceedingly anxious about him for the last month or two. Her anxiety was unnecessarily intensified by the contemptible conduct of a half-breed named Alexandre Rivoire, who, returning from Winnipeg at the time mentioned, informed her that he had met Peter there, where he was drinking and carousing, and going through with his money as fast as possible, and that he had no intention of returning to his family at Fort Ellice.

Fort Ellice, which was described on my way west last summer, is a very different looking place now. Then it was full of life and animation. Indians and white men were gathered here from all parts to see the Governor-General, and business was brisk on all sides. Now it wears a most disconsolate and deserted aspect. A freighter is starting out with his train westward for Prince Albert, and a surveyor's outfit is detained here by reason of strayed ponies, but otherwise the place appears utterly deserted by everybody who can manage to spend the winter away from it. Even the chief factor of the Hudson Bay Company is absent, the hotels are all but deserted, and, in short, the place has put on its winter's habit. Indeed I am inclined to think that Fort Ellice has seen its best days. People desiring to visit the Territory next summer will find it about as much to their advantage to start from Brandon with their ponies as from here, and in doing so they will save themselves a long and tedious trip by steamer. The weather is very sharp and frosty to-night, and I am not sorry that I shall have an opportunity of sleeping indoors.

BIRTLE, Dec. 5.—Owing to some unexpected delays I was not able to get away from Fort Ellice till after dinner to-day, and in consequence I only reached this point after dark this evening. Of course the country wears a very different look from that which it did in the summer, but we are now getting down to where the trails are beaten, and as we occasionally meet a team, the travelling is not nearly so lonely as it had been all the way from Calgary to Fort Ellice. Birtle has grown considerably since I was here last summer, and all in all it appears to be a lively prosperous little village, and from the amount of business that is done here I should imagine that it must be surrounded by a goodly number of thrifty and enterprising settlers. Already I begin to hear extravagant stories as to the boom in real estate at Winnipeg, Portage la Prairie, and Brandon.

RAPID CITY, Dec. 5.—Yesterday I drove from Birtle to Shoal Lake, and to-day from Shoal Lake to this point, where I am only twenty-two miles from the present terminus of the C. P. R. at Brandon. There is nothing in the journeyings of the past two days worthy of note. The ponies have been doing their work as cheerfully as ever, though they do not exactly know what to make of being stabled at night, and I find they do not fill themselves as well as when they were allowed to run out. Though the weather is intensely cold, I find they do much better when I tie them outside the stables than when they are boxed up in warm stalls. After a good deal of higgling and chaffering with local buyers, some half-dozen of whom approached me under the pretence that they wanted to buy my ponies, I discovered that they were all operating for one buyer from another part of the Province, who adopts the plan of making very low offers to every traveller who has ponies to sell, and having these offers repeated by half a dozen or more different agents. This gives a stranger the impression that ponies are really cheap, and if he is not up to the sharper's "little game" he is very liable to be caught by it. My ponies were very much better than the average that are offered here, and I was quite well aware of it myself. I held them, therefore, at from ten to fifteen dollars per head higher than the prices paid here for the native ponies brought in by surveyors. The local buyers professed to be highly amused at the price I set upon the animals, but they were evidently chagrined when they saw a gentleman on his way to Qu'Appelle pay me my price and take the ponies with him.

Like Birtle, Rapid City, has improved very considerably since I was here last summer. New buildings have gone up, and some little disposition to speculate in village lots has already manifested itself. Good locations on the main street sell at \$200 to \$250 each, though the lots are only of very modest dimensions. Like every other village in Manitoba, Rapid City expects to have a railway, but whether they will get it as soon as they expect it or not, I am not at all prepared to say. They have, however, a very good farming country all around them, and though I have no expectation that Rapid City will ever be a Chicago, or St. Louis, or even a St. Paul, I think it is destined to become a thrifty and prosperous little village.

BRANDON, Dec. 6.—After an intensely cold drive, and ten miles of it over a broad, treeless stretch called Beautiful Plains, I found the trail dipping gradually down into the valley of the Assiniboine, and on the slope of the opposite bank I saw the much-talked of town of Brandon. I need hardly say that it is made up almost entirely of new buildings, most of which are of unpainted boards, though some are more pretentious in character. Tents still figure largely, serving as warehouses, stables, etc. I did not find business at Brandon booming to quite such an extent as I had expected, having heard that lots of 25 feet frontage were selling here for \$1,000 a piece, but at the same time Brandon is lively enough just now, despite the intensely cold weather and notwithstanding the fact that travellers have for this season left off making excursions upon the plains. There is a population here of about 900 or possibly about 1,000, and all appear to have plenty to do. Being the end of the track Brandon cannot fail to be an important shipping point until some local terminus is established farther west, and even after that I think Brandon will continue to be a place of some importance, as there is a very good country spreading north, south, east and west of it. Of course I do not believe, nor expect the reader to believe, the extravagant stories told of the prices paid for property here, but I think it is true that lots are cut up into slices of not more than twenty-five frontage and sold very much more than they will ever be worth. To-night I saw a large number of drunken men and two or three fights—a novel sight to me, as during the months I spent in the North-West I have not seen three men under the influence of liquor and have seen no fighting, though I have been in very much larger crowds, and at Fort McLeod at least I have seen hundreds of men much more lawless in their proclivities. Frontiersmen, cattle-ranchers, packers, prospectors, and others who are to be found along the base of the Rocky Mountains from Edmonton to Fort McLeod, are not of the class from whom one would expect good behaviour, but still the fact remains that though in the North-West Territories I have met with hundreds of such, and with trappers, traders, half-breeds, and Indians, I have seen no fighting, and no appreciable degree of drunkenness during a stay of about four months, while having reached Brandon, where, as I understand, a license system prevails, I have seen a great deal of drunkenness and not a little fighting within the space of four hours. I have heard many people raise an outcry against the enforcement of prohibition in the North-West Territory, and I have heard many say that the Mounted Police was a useless force; but with the facts that have been so forcibly brought under my notice this evening staring me in the face, I can only come to the conclusion that strict prohibition is absolutely necessary to the well-being of the people of the North-West Territories, and that the North-West Mounted Police, in the enforcement of prohibition alone, is rendering a service to the country, worth at least five times what it costs.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE JOURNAL CLOSED—AN IMPARTIAL OPINION OF THE LAND SPECULATION BOOM—A CROP OF "GARDENS"—MYTHICAL FORTUNES AND PAPER CITIES—WORDS OF WARNING—THE STATE OF BUSINESS IN WINNIPEG—BUBBLE PRICES FOR LOTS.

WINNIPEG, Dec. 10.—The last entry in my journal closed at Brandon on the evening of the 6th inst. The morning of the 7th was an intensely cold one, and as the C. P. R. ticket agent only managed to open his office a few moments before the train moved out from the station, the result of his tardiness was that a large share of the passengers were unable to procure tickets and were compelled to pay the conductor the customary ten cents extra. There was a good deal of grumbling over this little circumstance, but of course the conductor, who was not to blame, had to listen to all the grumbling, while the ticket agent, who in addition to his laziness was impertinent and indolent after his office was opened, escaped unnoticed, as no one had time to stop and tell him what manner of man he was. The first stop made after the train had pulled out from the station was at Grand Valley, which is only a little way below Brandon (perhaps two miles), and on the opposite or northern bank of the Assiniboine. There is here a very pretty site for a village, and indeed this was at first supposed to be the spot upon which Brandon was to be built. The property here had been located by a settler, and it is said the C. P. R. Syndicate offered him \$20,000 in cash for his claim, which had, I suppose, cost him not more than one or two hundred dollars originally. He could not see his way clear to accept the offer made him, and the railway people decided to move up the river and over to the south bank. I suppose the Grand Valley location is now worth \$1,500 or \$2,000, but I am afraid it will be a long time before its owner will have another chance of accepting \$20,000 for it. Between Brandon and Portage La Prairie there is little to be seen at this season of the year to interest the traveller. At Portage La Prairie the train only stopped long enough to give the passengers time to take luncheon. From Portage La Prairie the journey to Winnipeg was not particularly interesting, though at the first-mentioned place the number of eastward bound passengers was considerably increased. It was dark when we reached Winnipeg, and as the night was an intensely cold and disagreeable one I was not long in taking passage for the hotel where I intended to house myself for the night. Of course I could not escape a fusillade of questions as soon as it was discovered that I had come from the North-West Territory, and several individuals, who had never been fifty miles west of Winnipeg in their lives, volunteered the information that Edmonton was the greatest place in the North-West, and that town lots were already selling there at fancy prices. In return for the many questions that were showered upon me regarding the North-West, I ventured to make some

enquiries regarding Winnipeg. "Of course, everything is booming here," was the reply.

"How long is this sort of thing to last?" I asked.

"Oh, it's only commenced," said the landlord.

"Flush times usually run in decades," remarked a sallow-faced, philosophical-looking speculator and land agent who is worth a million or more "in his mind," and who will realize that in cash when he sells all his property at the price he asks for it.

I ventured to suggest that values might be slightly inflated in Winnipeg just now, and as those present were peaceably inclined I escaped with my life, but I was cautioned against any public expression of views "so inimical to the well-being of the city, and utterly devoid of anything like a foundation in fact."

"Are properties bringing a rent at all proportionate to the prices asked for them?"

"Oh, yes," replied the land speculator; "twelve to fifteen per cent. at least."

Turning to the landlord of the hotel I asked; "What does the owner of this hotel hold it at?" "I don't know," he replied, "but he refused \$60,000 for it the other day."

"And what rent do you pay him?"

"\$1,200 a year."

I looked around expecting the philosophical land speculator to explain to me how it was that property well located on Main Street would yield in rent only two per cent. upon a sum avowedly less than its estimated value, but he had disappeared, and so I went to supper.

After supper I spent some time in visiting hotels, dry-goods stores, and other places where business was being done, with a view of judging from observation if the trade of the place was such as would warrant anything like the extravagant prices asked for real estate, and my impression was that it would not. Prices are certainly much lower than when I was here last summer, though I do not believe that values have greatly shrunk in any other part of the Dominion. In addition to this the stores do not appear to be nearly as well patronized as they were then, even though there is at present a large floating population in the city.

In the hotels all the talk was of real estate. In the hallway and billiard-room of one hotel I observed no less than five groups, each made up of one intended victim, one ostensible vendor or real estate operator, and one, two, or three "disinterested" individuals acting parts that in ordinary confidence games would be denominated the roles of "cappers." I do not mean to insinuate, of course, that all these transactions in real estate are characterized by a given amount of rascality, but I should be very sorry to be responsible for the assertion that two-thirds of them are not. The great advance in the values of real estate has, of course, rendered it possible for many transactions to be made in which both parties are gainers. For example, "A" owns property that cost him in the old times only \$200 or \$300. At the beginning

of the excitement he sells it to "B" for as many thousands; "B" sells it to "C" and more than doubles his money, and "C" sells it to "D" at a still more extraordinary advance; but many here are under the impression that this sort of thing is about at an end, and that properties have reached the top figure. While I cannot pretend to know enough about the actual state of affairs here to be able to judge in such matters, I have no hesitation in venturing the opinion that if the prices at which property is quoted here are real and not bogus the top figure has been reached. To night I have heard men talk about property selling on Main Street at \$100 per inch, and \$1,000 per foot appears to be a standard quotation for that locality. While I can hardly doubt that something near such prices has been given and taken, I am very certain that as a rule it is safe to largely discount the prices I have quoted for property in this city. Indeed there is such a diversity in the character and standing of the operators in real estate and such a diversity in the modes of operation, that one is at a loss to know how to begin in describing both operators and operations. There are, of course, many responsible business men conducting their transactions on strictly business principles, and though perhaps a little sanguine, they will doubtless prove cool-headed enough to come out of this speculative bedlam with well-filled pockets and balances on the right side of the ledger. Such operators, however, do not by any means make up the most numerous class of the land speculators in Winnipeg. This evening a beardless boy was pointed out to me as the owner of a bank account worth \$125,000. I was told that he came to Winnipeg in August with only \$25 in his pocket, and that he had made all his money by putting up margins and selling the property before the second payments became due. This boy looked to me very much like one of the average "candy butchers" that one meets every day on railway trains, and for aught I know he may have been one. It is also quite possible that the man who told me this marvellous story about the boy's success may have been misinformed or he may have been lying. I believe there is more or less lying about marvellous fortunes made in Winnipeg every twenty-four hours, and I see no particular reason why the man who told me about the large sum of money amassed in such an incredibly short time by this beardless boy who commenced with the small capital of \$25 may not have been lying also. Just as I was going out of the hotel I heard the name of an Ontario man that was comparatively familiar to me pronounced. Somebody had been enquiring how he had "made out" in Winnipeg. "Why," said the man of whom the question was asked, "he has only been here two months, but he has made \$35,000." I made up my mind that my friend from Guelph had done pretty well. Just as I entered the next hotel I heard a man remark that Mr. So-and-so, of Hamilton, was intending to return to Ontario in a day or two, having made his "pile." On subsequent enquiries I found that this Hamilton gentleman had been in Winnipeg six weeks; that he had had fairly good success, and that he had cleared \$35,000. Ten minutes later I was introduced to a gentleman from Brantford, and in due time I learned that he too had made \$35,000. Three men from Montreal had made \$35,000 apiece; seven men from Ottawa had done like-

wise, and finally some one told a story of a man from Muskoka who had made \$37,500. I need not add that the story was immediately discredited, and the man forthwith ostracized from the society of Winnipeg financial gossips. Of course I cannot pretend to discriminate as to who tell the truth and who lie regarding the big sums made by people in Winnipeg property.

Here is a romance I heard the other night concerning a young man who lives in a town somewhere east of Toronto. It may be true, or it may be false. He was a son of a very wealthy gentleman who had retired from business. The boy had gone through a good deal of property, and the old man was getting tired of paying his bills. The youth was paying his addresses to the pretty and accomplished daughter of a prosperous business man. When the latter discovered that the young man had already discounted his prospects he declined to allow his daughter to have any further communication with him until he proved himself able to support a wife properly, and the tender-hearted maiden straightway transferred her affections from the ex-bank clerk to a "next-article-please-young-man," who sported the blackest moustache in the leading dry-goods house of the village, and who had fond hopes of some day becoming a full-fledged commercial traveller. The young prodigal had resolved to do better, and on the strength of his representations his father gave him \$500 with which to go West, in the hope that he would grow up with the country. He reached Winnipeg with \$400 in his pocket, and straightway invested \$100 in Winnipeg whiskey. While in a state of hopeless inebriation he staggered into a real estate salesroom, where an auction was going on, and made a bid on a property which was immediately knocked down to him. His remaining \$300 barely covered the margin that would give him the option of paying up the remainder of the purchase money within one week; but he paid it over and staggered to his hotel scarcely knowing what he had done. In the morning he rang for a brandy-and-soda, and when he came to examine his pocket-book to find a tip for the porter he discovered that his money was all gone, and instead of it was a document the purport of which he could not at first understand. Gradually, however, the remembrance of the transaction came back to him, and feeling pretty thoroughly sick of his first venture as a real estate operator, he dressed himself, borrowed \$10 from the landlord (this is the improbable part of the story), and made his way to the telegraph office, through which he meant to ask his father for more money. To his disappointment, however, he discovered that the line was not working between Winnipeg and St. Paul (this is the probable part of the story), and he went back to his hotel disconsolate. For six days the line did not work, and on the seventh there was a great crush in the telegraph office, and he knew the line was working. While he was waiting for his turn an excited individual with hollow cheeks and haggard mien approached him. After eyeing him earnestly for ten seconds the stranger eagerly asked, "Are you Mr. — who purchased lot — about a week ago?" "Yes," replied the young man, "I believe I did." "Well, I have been looking for you for three days and three nights. I want to know what you will take for the property." The young man did not know whether it would be safe to ask as much as he had given for the pro-

perty, and thereby get back the whole of his margin or not, and while he was hesitating the stranger said, "I am in a hurry; please relieve my anxiety at once; will you take \$35,000 more than you gave for the property?" The young man said "Yes," and they wept upon each other's necks. It is not necessary to add that the profligate youth went back to the home of his childhood, and claimed the hand of the maiden whom he had so nobly and gallantly won; nor how the pure-minded, single-hearted creature who had turned up her nose at him when he was not worth a-dollar-and-a-half, smiled graciously upon him and said "Yes" when he was worth \$35,000. I do not ask my readers to believe any more of these romances than they see fit, but as they pass current in Winnipeg, and as they are poured into the ears of every gullible Ontario or Quebec man who comes into the city with money in his pocket, I do not see any impropriety in repeating them. It is almost impossible for one who has not been here to understand how thoroughly rampant the spirit of speculation has become. I have been told that a prominent employee of the C. P. R. Syndicate was removed from his position on the ground that he was too speculative for the place, and I have often heard it more than hinted that General Rosser may be removed at any time for a similar reason, and that the gentleman who is to be appointed in his place is to receive a salary of \$50,000 per year for the purpose of inducing him to solely devote his time and energies to the interests of the Syndicate. These things may be only rumours, but I believe nobody will doubt that General Rosser has been lending his name to the promoters of nearly all the little cities that are springing up along the "supposed" ramifications of the C. P. R. system, who announce as a clinching argument in favour of the future prosperity of their city locations that General Rosser has purchased a large number of lots.

Before I close I will relate a story that was told me in Winnipeg, but not by a Winnipeg man. It is of an Ontario man who arrived in Winnipeg with \$2,000. He speculated boldly, confining himself chiefly to margins until he had run his \$2,000 up to \$6,000. He then saw what he conceived to be a grand opportunity, and put up the \$6,000 on a very short margin, expecting to sell the large property in a fortnight, and realize very handsomely. Day after day rolled by, and he found that the property did not sell as well as he expected. In fact, he could not turn over a foot of it. Gradually the fact dawned upon him that he had been victimised, and finally the time for the payment of the remainder of the purchase money expired, his margin was sacrificed, and he found himself financially "wiped out." I found two or three people in Winnipeg who had heard the story of this Ontario man, but it is not one that operators care particularly to relate, and of course the victim himself was not anxious to publish his misfortune. Indeed, I think such cases are much more numerous than people generally suppose, but it would be treason to tell such a story in Winnipeg.

CHAPTER XLV.

RESUME OF THE JOURNEY—DESCRIPTION OF THE GROUND TRAVERSED—THE GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE SOIL THROUGHOUT THE NORTH-WEST TERRITORIES.

The record of my journey across the prairies to the Rocky Mountains and back by the way of Edmonton closed with my return to Winnipeg, but before dropping the subject altogether it may be as well to give a very brief *resumé* of the whole journey.

THE GROUND COVERED.

The different stages of the journey may be summed up as follows:—Lord Lorne and his party left Toronto by the Northern Railway about noon on the 21st July, and boarded the steamer *Frances Smith* at Collingwood the same evening. Prince Arthur's Landing was reached a little before noon on Monday, 25th July. The next day His Excellency and party went by rail over the Thunder Bay branch of the Canada Pacific to Barrett's Bay, on Wabigoon Lake. On 27th July the party took passage by a yacht in tow of a small tug to the Seven-mile Portage, walked over that portage, and encamped on Garden Island, which is about four miles west of the Landing and in Eagle Lake. On Thursday, 28th, after crossing Eagle Lake and one or two smaller bodies of water, they encamped on the shore of Dryberry or Bell's Lake. On the 29th they reached Rat Portage, on the night of the 30th reached Winnipeg. On the morning of the 8th August they again took passage on the Canada Pacific, reaching the end of the track, which was then about one hundred miles from Winnipeg, about the middle of the afternoon. They were then taken by the Mounted Police outfit to their first camp, some seven miles farther along the trail. On the night of Aug. 10th, they were encamped at Rapid City, and on the 11th at Shoal Lake, and early in the forenoon of the 13th they reached Fort Ellice. On August 17th they reached Qu'Appelle, and on the 25th August they crossed the South Saskatchewan, and reached Carlton the same evening. On the 27th August they reached Prince Albert by steamer; on the 28th returned to Carlton; and on the 30th reached Battleford by steamer. On the 1st September the outfit left Battleford, and on the 12th of the same month, about noon, reached Fort Calgary, where they remained till the morning of the 15th, and Fort McLeod was reached late in the afternoon of the 17th. On the morning of the 20th the whole party left Fort McLeod, and reached Pincher Creek on the same evening. On September 22nd I left His Excellency's party, who were then at the Indian Supply Farm, near Pincher Creek, and about a day's journey from the boundary line, and the same afternoon I made an excursion up into the mountains near the entrance of the Crow's Nest Pass. On the following evening I reached Fort McLeod, and on the 1st October reached Calgary,

leaving the latter place on the 5th October for Edmonton. I reached Edmonton on the 15th October, Battleford, November 3rd, the South Saskatchewan, November 11th, Humboldt, November 19th, Touchwood Hills, November 23rd, Fort Ellice, December 2nd, and Winnipeg on the night of December 7th. The distance I have travelled between the date of my leaving Toronto on the 21st July and returning on the 16th December, may be roughly estimated at 6,000 miles, only a little more than half of which was accomplished by rail and steamboat, the remainder being made chiefly with ponies.

As regards the country traversed in travelling from Toronto to Winnipeg, it is not necessary to add anything to what has already been written. If the traveller takes the all-rail route, he leaves British territory at Sarnia or Windsor, and does not enter it again until he is within seventy miles of Winnipeg; while if he travels as Lord Lorne did, over Lake Superior and the uncompleted Thunder Bay branch, he passes over a region that has twice been pretty fully described in another series of my letters within the last year and a half. From Winnipeg westward, however, it appears that comparatively little is known of the country. People are apt to speak of Winnipeg, Manitoba, and the North-West Territory as though they were to a certain extent convertible terms, and that it was only necessary to go to Winnipeg to learn all about Manitoba and the North-West Territory. Nothing could be more absurd to one who has travelled from Winnipeg to the Rocky Mountains and back, making nearly the whole distance with ponies, and noting the leading characteristics of the country mile by mile. When I reached Winnipeg last summer I met a great many people who professed to know all about the North-West, and talked as though they had travelled all over it, but upon cross-examination of the mildest type they admitted that their explorations of the North-West had never extended beyond Portage La Prairie, Lake Manitoba, Brandon, or at farthest Fort Ellice. In Winnipeg the majority of people whom one meets take nearly the same absurd view regarding Manitoba and the North-West Territory that many Ontario people do regarding Winnipeg and both the Province and Territory. Despite all that has been published on the subject, and notwithstanding the fact that even the very indifferent maps now extant make the relative locations of various points in the North-West easily comprehensible to anybody who cares to study them, I found men in Winnipeg, who were ready to give me all sorts of advice and instructions regarding my intended trip, who had not the faintest conception as to the identity of localities anywhere beyond Fort Ellice. Now, in reality, a traveller going into the North-West by way of Winnipeg, whether he considers the question of time, expense, or fatigue, will find that he is only on the threshold of his journey when he reaches Winnipeg, and has not fairly commenced his trip across the plains until he is beyond Fort Ellice.

THE SOIL AS A WHOLE.

Those who have read the instalments of my journal that have already been published will come to the conclusion that my views as to the proportion of

good agricultural land in the North-West Territory are quite as favourable, or, I may say, sanguine, as those of anyone who has travelled over the same ground and published his impressions; and now, considering the country through which I have travelled as a whole, I have nothing to retract regarding the excellence of the soil or its adaptability for settlement by farmers and stock-raisers. From Winnipeg to Fort Ellice I saw very little land that would not be rated good agricultural country in any part of Ontario. True there were some tracts that would require drainage, and I believe there are some places where drainage might be difficult, especially where the water is backed up from Lake Manitoba, so that the lowering of that lake would be the only means of affording relief; but, taking this whole stretch of country into consideration, the proportion of good agricultural land is vastly higher than any corresponding stretch that I know of, either in Ontario or Quebec. From Fort Ellice to Qu'Appelle, a distance of about 150 miles, there is very little but excellent land to be seen. The first ten miles west of Ellice is, perhaps, about the poorest region that the traveller has thus far met with on his westward course from Winnipeg, and it consists of a broad stretch of barren sandy plain, where the vegetation is very scanty. Beyond this comes a strip of three or four miles of stony muskeg, which, though it might be made useful in almost any part of Ontario, is rated as "desert" here. Then comes some eighty or ninety miles of magnificent prairie land, broken here and there by sloughs or lakelets, but, upon the whole, very desirable for agricultural purposes. Bluffs of timber are scattered along the trail, although for about twenty miles in one place there intervenes a stretch of treeless prairies. There is plenty of timber in sight to the northward, however, all along these plains, and I do not think there is a quarter section along the whole of this eighty or ninety miles that would not afford an excellent living to any industrious farmer. About thirty or thirty-five miles from Qu'Appelle Post the trail leads down into the valley of the Qu'Appelle River, which I have already described as one of the most charming spots in the North-West. All along this valley, which is, perhaps, two miles wide, the trail leads through a region that is not only picturesquely beautiful, but admirably adapted for agriculture. From Qu'Appelle the trail strikes northward to Touchwood Hills, and for the intervening fifty miles the country is all that could be wished for by industrious and thrifty settlers. In Touchwood Hills, as I have already explained, it would be difficult to farm on a very large scale, but for settlers of moderate means, who would be content to work fields of from two and a half to ten acres in size, the opening offered by this locality is an exceptionally good one. There is plenty of timber, and I think that every quarter-section would afford, on an average, 140 or 145 acres of good agricultural land, or, if it fell short of that figure, such shortcoming would, in all probability, be more than made up by one of those hay marshes that invariably prove invaluable to a settler before he has had time to establish meadows in the regular way. In this connection I would like to correct an error into which some Canadian farmers fall regarding prairie land. Many of them appear to imagine that in getting a prairie farm they can cut all the hay they

want on any portion of it. This, however, is a mistake, and a mischievous one. As a rule, the prairie land in the North-West, though affording excellent forage, will, in its natural state, not yield grass enough to the acre to pay for mowing. The most of the hay obtained there is cut upon low-lying flats or marshes that are usually too wet to be used for grain-growing.

West of Touchwood Hills comes the great salt plain, which is said to be thirty-five miles in width from its eastern to its western boundary. Though this belt of treeless prairie is called "salt," I am inclined to think there is very little salt in its composition. Nearly all the sloughs to be found in it are strongly impregnated with alkali, and what little growth of shrubbery there is upon it is not sufficient to afford shelter or firewood for camping purposes. It is therefore something of a bugbear to the freighters either in winter or summer, but otherwise it is very far from being the miserable desert that one would suppose it to be on hearing its name. It is probable there are portions of it which would be difficult to drain, but I think the most of it could, with comparatively little labour, be converted into excellent grain-growing territory, and whether it could or not I am very certain that the whole plain would make an excellent summer range for cattle. I have been told by those who have experimented in this region that some of the strongest alkali lands that have been found in the North-West have lost their alkaline characteristics with two years' cropping, and if this be the case I fail to understand why the salt plains should be any more uninviting than any other portion of the North-West where the soil is rich, the surface water undrinkable, and timber scarce.

West of salt plain is a belt of light timber, broken with little patches of prairie, and here and there a small creek or slough. This belt is about twenty-five miles wide, or perhaps a little more, and in the western edge of it is the telegraph station, Humboldt. Farming has never been tried here to a sufficient extent to afford any guarantee as to the character of the country. I have been told, however, that during the past season potatoes failed to ripen. I know that the summer of 1881 has been an unfavourable one throughout the North-West, but it is quite possible that this particular spot, which appears to be very low-lying as compared with the surrounding country, is subject to such low temperatures in summer and early autumn as to make it an undesirable locality for the settler.

CHAPTER XLVI

FURTHER RESUME OF THE JOURNEY—A GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SOIL THROUGHOUT THE NORTH-WEST TERRITORIES.

West of Humboldt the prairie in the immediate vicinity of the trail is almost treeless for about twenty-five miles. To the northward bluffs of considerable magnitude are visible, but to the south as far as the eye can reach there is scarcely a clump of any size to be seen. Indeed, this twenty-five mile plain communicates directly with, and is a part of, the great treeless belt of what is termed "true prairie" to the south. All along this portion of the road there are hills, valleys, marshes, and plateaus. Here and there is a gravelly hill, and occasionally a slough of such depth and magnitude as would perhaps preclude the possibility of satisfactory draining except at a large expense, but I should say that more than 95 per cent. of the land in this twenty-five mile belt is quite fit for agriculture. Beyond this, again, comes a beautiful semi-wooded region, where the timber is considerably heavier than that ordinarily found in prairie bluffs, and while the country is not sufficiently timbered for woodland, the groves and strips of bush are too numerous and too large in extent to be characterized as prairie bluffs. This region I have heard called "Little Turtle Mountain," or "The Little Turtle Mountains." The hills are scarcely of sufficient magnitude to deserve the name of mountains, and would not receive that appellative anywhere except in a prairie country. This region, though apparently entirely without settlers just now, will some time or another become a favourite spot. There is plenty of timber, very rich soil, the land appears to be fairly watered, though very little of it would require anything in the way of artificial drainage. As in Touchwood Hills, there are no great plains here where farmers could plough furrows a mile or a mile and a half in length, but the plateaus, hillsides and valleys are broader and longer than those in Touchwood Hills, and certainly the land is not sufficiently broken to prove undesirable for farming on any but the most gigantic scale. This hilly region extends for some thirty miles, and includes in it some alkaline lakes, among which may be mentioned Big Salt Lake, which, with its surroundings, constitutes one of the most romantic bits of scenery to be met with between Winnipeg and the South Saskatchewan. Some six or seven miles before the traveller reaches Gabriel Dumont's Crossing on the South Saskatchewan he strikes a belt of sandy soil, which extends the rest of the way to the river. There is plenty of timber here, and the soil, though light, would, I think, prove very productive in the hands of a competent farmer; but as I have before intimated the half-breeds and many of the white settlers in this country are inclined to condemn land, unless it can be cropped year after year, and generation after generation,

with good results, even though it has not been treated with a single pound of manure. This brings the reader to the South Saskatchewan, and before going further I would stop to correct what must be an erroneous impression that has become very prevalent regarding both branches of the Saskatchewan. Again and again I have been questioned as to what was the character of the country in the valley of the Saskatchewan. So far as the valley of the South Saskatchewan goes, very little can be said of it. This stream winds through an immense tract of prairie country, and by means of small branches and coulees, which flow down deep ravines, it drains an immense area, but the valley of the stream proper is not more than about one hundred yards wide on either side of high-water mark. It is as though a river ran through an immense winding canal. The high grassy plateau runs up so close to the river's edge that in places it almost overhangs the water. In many places along the Saskatchewan one might drive till he was within half a mile of the great river, and still not mistrust its proximity. So far as the North Saskatchewan is concerned, almost the same thing applies to it. It has a little more of a valley, and its bottom lands are rather more heavily timbered, and in places, the north shore especially, slopes down toward the river; but for all this it is of much the same character as that which distinguishes its great namesake that comes up from the treeless plains of the south. To speak of the Valley of the Saskatchewan, and in so doing refer to the country drained by the branches north and south of the great Saskatchewan, which ultimately falls into Lake Winnipeg, would be to refer to nearly the whole of the North-Western Territory, or at all events, to what constitutes the most valuable portion of it. The North Saskatchewan, rising in the mountains away west of Edmonton, forms almost the northern limit of that portion of the North-West Territory about which anything is very definitely known, and its southern branches, the most important perhaps being the Battle River, drain a belt of country nearly 100 miles to the south of it. On the other hand, the South Saskatchewan, with its many tributaries, direct and indirect, drains almost the whole of the southern and western portion of the Territory. Red Deer River, which leaves the mountain region only a short distance south of Battle River, and some other tributaries of the North Saskatchewan, falls into the great south branch. South of this again the Bow River, the Elbow, Fish Creek, Pine Creek, Sheep Creek, Tongue Creek, High River, Willow Creek, the Old Man's River, with its numerous forks, Pincher Creek, and in fact all the streams flowing out of that broad belt of magnificent land, bounded by Red Deer River on the north and Belly River on the south, ultimately find their way eastward through the great south branch of the Saskatchewan. An air line, drawn from the point where the Calgary and Edmonton trail crosses Red Deer River to the point where the McLeod and Benton trail crosses Belly River, would be over 200 miles in length, and yet such a line would come considerably short of spanning the area drained by the South Saskatchewan on the fifth principal meridian alone. It will thus be seen that the term I have alluded to, "The valley of the Saskatchewan," is rather too com-

prehensive and indefinite to be held as referring to any particular section of the North-West.

On the west bank of the South Saskatchewan there is another narrow strip of sandy loam, but it is scarcely as wide as that on the east side, and settlers in the immediate vicinity of the river appear to be doing well. Settlers' houses are to be observed all the way to Duck Lake, a distance of some ten miles or more. The land is level, fairly timbered, and when I passed through in the summer the crops were looking extremely well. From Duck Lake to Carleton, a distance of twelve miles, the country is also partially settled. Its characteristics are essentially the same as those observable between Duck Lake and Dumont's crossing. Carleton is situated on the North Saskatchewan, and is, I think, surrounded on every side by thoroughly good agricultural land. One of the most favoured settlements in this region, however, is 40 miles north-west of Carleton by the river. I refer to Prince Albert. The whole of the settlements in this region, including Duck Lake, Carleton, and the village of Prince Albert and scattering settlements in different directions are generally known to the outside world as "Prince Albert." This is one of the largest settlements in the North-West, and, perhaps as well known to the outside world as any other, although, perhaps, not so highly praised as Edmonton. The soil here is a rich, black loam, of a character well calculated to be inexhaustible in fertility, but I am inclined to think that had Prince Albert not been favoured with a much better class of settlers than those usually found in the North-West, it would never have attained to its present standing. The farmers here are industrious, energetic, and as a rule beforehand with their work. They know that they are liable to be visited with early frosts, and they are nearly always on the lookout and ready for them. Fall ploughing is practised to a very great extent, and the seed is put in the ground at the earliest possible moment. By careful management and hard work the farmers here have won for their settlement a reputation of which they are justly proud, but I am well convinced that had the land here fallen to any but first-class settlers the place would have been condemned on account of its climate. In addition to being very far north (some 600 miles or more farther north than Toronto), it has immense stretches of muskeg, swamps, and low-lying flats away to the east of it, and below the junction of the North and South Saskatchewan.

The temperature falls very low here in winter. I am told that in the village of Prince Albert, last winter, a spirit thermometer which only registered 60° below zero stood at its limit for some days, and that the temperature went down to that point on more than one occasion.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE TRAIL FROM CARLETON TO BATTLEFORD—THE CLIMATE OF THE NORTH-WEST—THE BOW RIVER DISTRICT ADAPTED FOR CATTLE RANCHING—PROBABLE VALUABLE GRAZING DISTRICT—RICH SOIL IN THE VICINITY OF EDMONTON—A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE COLD IN WINTER.

The trail from Carlton to Battleford follows close along the south bank of the North Saskatchewan. The distance between the two points is estimated to be 110 miles by the shortest route. Seventy or eighty miles of the road traverses fine, upland prairies, the soil being good, and possessed of all the natural advantages incident to that sort of country, affording as it does almost illimitable stretches for gigantic fields, and requiring little or nothing in the way of artificial drainage. Between thirty and forty miles from Battleford the Eagle Hills are reached, and here, though the land is, of course, more broken, it is exceedingly rich in quality, and some few settlers who have already taken up land in this district are having marvellously good crops and absolutely certain harvests. The Eagle Hills may be said to extend all the way to Battleford.

As I have already had a good deal to say about the capital of the North-West Territories, it will not be necessary to add much here; its location is admirable, both from an agricultural and a commercial point of view. Being at the junction of the Battle River with the North Saskatchewan, it has facilities for navigation north-west, south-west, and eastward, and, besides this, a country lying to the south of it through which heavy-freight waggons could be run with perfect safety all the way to Calgary, and McLeod if necessary. In no part of the North-West did I see better growing crops when I was on my way westward, and in no part, either of the North-West or Manitoba, did I find the farmers better satisfied with the results of their season's work than I did here on my return. The soil is not so heavy as that of Edmonton or Prince Albert proper, but this rich sandy loam that is to be found everywhere about Battleford is, I am convinced, in the long run, as profitable soil for the agriculturist, taking one year with another, as can be found anywhere on the continent. This autumn excellent harvests were taken off fields that had been cropped continuously without manuring for five years. Here I found no disposition on the part even of the most sanguine settlers to apologize for any shortcoming owing to a backward summer and early frosts, though several of the settlers who had been tardy about gathering their potatoes suffered from the early advent of winter weather. From all that I can learn I think that, as a rule, the winters are less severe at Battleford than in any other of the northern settlements in the Territory. From its location, it cannot, in the very nature of things, be subject to the visitations of blizzards or that intense degree of cold that characterizes more low-lying localities, and

especially those in the neighbourhood of extensive muskegs or marshy flats. I have no hesitation whatever in saying that there is no settlement in the North-West possessed, all in all, of natural advantages equal to those of Battleford. Whether the main line of the Canada Pacific Railway is destined ever to reach Battleford or not, I am unable to say; but that Battleford will, in a comparatively short time, have railway communication with the outer world, I have not the slightest doubt.

South-west of Battleford the trail made by the Governor-General and his party *en route* to Calgary led for the most part through treeless prairie. For by far the greater part of the distance between Battleford and Red Deer River the country traversed was composed of good productive soil, but of course the absence of timber will for many years operate as a bar to its settlement. In speaking of this region it is generally described as "The Plains," and for that reason very many suppose that it is one broad level stretch, with no more undulation than a billiard table. This is a very great mistake. There are broad plateaus stretching a very considerable distance; there are wide deep valleys and successions of great ridges that lie from two to three miles apart, and look not unlike giant waves. The growth of grass in this region is, as a rule, strong and vigorous. Buffalo grass is met with long before Red Deer River is reached, and it is found in abundance nearly all the way to Calgary. Some day in the not far distant future I imagine that a great portion of this land will become valuable as a grazing region. There are deep coolies extending along for many miles in almost every direction, which would furnish good winter ranges for thousands of cattle and horses, and there are numerous sloughs and marshes where large quantities of hay can be cut and gathered at a very moderate expense; and in short, with the single drawback that good pure water is not everywhere readily found, the region is in every way well adapted for a grazing country. Whether or not the lack of running water could be met by artesian wells is as yet, I suppose, an unsolved problem; but even were this question to be answered in the negative, there would still remain territory sufficient for the sustenance of millions of cattle adjacent to Red Deer River, Bow River, and numerous other creeks and rivers to the south of them.

On reaching Calgary the traveller is in the very heart of the grazing country, and all the way south to Fort McLeod he sees little but the richest of black loam wherever the ground is broken. Indeed it is doubtful if a 100-mile stretch of better soil can be found anywhere in the Territory than that lying along the trail between Calgary and McLeod. Of course its value as a grain-growing region must for the present be slightly problematical. The ranchmen who have brought in immense herds of cattle are of course very anxious to discourage the settlement of the country, which would in time have the effect of compelling them to look out ranges further from the timber, but John Glenn, Livingston, McFarlane, Washter, and other farmers settled in the very heart of the cattle ranching country are growing rich off their farms in spite of all the "lions in the path" that the cattle ranchmen have conjured up. On the other hand, however, I think that the settler in pick-

ing out a grain farm so close to the mountains runs some little risk of casting his lot in one of the many little narrow belts through which summer frosts occasionally wander down from the mountains.

That the Bow River country is admirably adapted for cattle ranching I do not think there is any reasonable room for doubt, but I think it quite possible that there may be an outcry against it next season. It is more than possible that a great many of the animals that have been brought in and put upon the Cochrane ranche will die before spring. I saw a large herd of cattle *en route* to this range very late in September after there had been two or three light snow falls. The absurdity of such management as this is too apparent to require pointing out, as everyone who knows anything of cattle ranching knows that every animal should become acclimated and accustomed to its new range while the weather is pleasant and the grass abundant everywhere; but in this case the folly consisted not merely in taking the cattle to a new range very late in the season, but also in giving them a long, and fatiguing journey from the grazing lands of Montana at a time when they could not by any possibility have time to recruit again before the advent of cold weather. In addition to all this, I am told that in this ranche very little hay was put up during the summer, and not by any means enough to meet the probable wants of the establishment during the coming winter. If this should be the case, it will probably prove another potent cause of loss. It will be understood that so far as the bulk of their herds are concerned, ranchmen do not count on feeding them a spear of hay winter or summer, but at the same time it is very evident that in every large herd of cattle there must be many cases in which the feeding of a few forkfuls of hay may in the winter save the life of what will be a valuable animal by the opening of the following summer. In order to meet such cases it is desirable that a very considerable quantity of hay should be put up every season, or at all events that an abundance should be stored about the ranche, whether the product of the current, or of any former season. It is quite possible that a large herd of cattle might winter safely with only a very few tons of hay in store for emergencies, but cases of sickness are very apt to arise in sufficient numbers to necessitate the feeding of no inconsiderable amount. Besides this, in a region that has been so imperfectly explored as the Bow River country, and where the winters are so little understood, it is just possible that a ranchman might find his cattle occasionally suffering from a prolonged absence of the highly-prized Chinook winds. While such a misfortune is hardly looked for by the ranchmen, I do not think it is wise to wholly ignore the possibility of its occurrence. It must be remembered that, unlike horses, cattle cannot paw for a living, and if the winds do not sweep the hillsides bare they are sure to have a hard time of it.

In common with others who have visited this locality, I expect that, ere long, cattle ranching will become a very important industry here, but at the same time I have not the slightest doubt that an intelligently-conducted horse-rancho would prove a much safer and equally profitable investment. As I have already given my reasons for this opinion, and as in a previous

letter I fully described what I thought to be the best system on which to establish and conduct a horse-ranche, it is not necessary for me to add anything just now, farther than that a more protracted and intimate acquaintance, not only with the ponies, but with the climate, of the North-West, has only served to confirm me in the opinions to which I then committed myself.

South and west of McLeod as far as Pincher Creek and the Crow's Nest Pass, which were the limits of my journey in that direction, there is very little but thoroughly good agricultural and grazing land to be seen. The soil in some of the river and creek bottoms appears to be occasionally light and gravelly, as though the alluvial deposits had been washed out by freshets, but in the main, both uplands and bottom lands in this region are rich and productive, and the only factor that makes the value of the country as a grain-growing region problematical is the question of summer frosts. I think however, that the belts in which these visitations occur, though they may be frequent, are very circumscribed in area, and that a large portion of this rich country lying close to the base of the Rocky Mountains will be found to be admirably suited to the production of wheat and coarse grains.

Commencing now with my return journey, which, after leaving the back track, began at Calgary, the first 100 miles, or at all events the first 80 or 90 miles on the Calgary and Edmonton trail appear to be as fine cattle ranching country as has been seen anywhere in the Territory. I think, too, that the belt of grazing land here is very broad, extending probably all the way from the foot hills of the Rocky Mountains, and out along nearly the whole course of Red Deer River. At the point where this trail crosses Red Deer River, however, and in fact some fifteen or twenty miles to the south of it, the prairie is too much overgrown with weeds and fine brush to be considered a good grazing region, but the soil is remarkably rich, free from all objectionable properties, easily drained, and in all respects desirable for agricultural purposes, and this may be said of it north of the Red Deer up as far as Battle River. In this whole region, that is from a point about twenty miles south of the crossing of Red Deer River up to Battle River, there is a fair supply of timber, including besides the ever-present white poplar and grey willow, a considerable quantity of cotton-wood, a fair sprinkling of spruce, and here and there a few sticks of white birch.

From the crossing of Battle River all the way to the North Saskatchewan at Edmonton the country is much too wet and low-lying, to be at all desirable unless it could be very extensively drained. In this region I saw more waste territory than on all the rest of my journey from Winnipeg to the Rocky Mountains and back. It may be described, indeed, as one monstrous swamp of very rich black loam, and a few ridges of fairly-drained soil traversing it from east to west. The last of those ridges strikes the trail about four miles south of Edmonton and its width extends all the way to the river bank opposite the village.

About the Village of Edmonton, on the north shore of the Saskatchewan, and west of it nine miles to the Catholic Mission at St. Albert, and I believe

for a very considerable distance to the north and east, there is exceptionally rich land, which, in years past, has proved very productive, yielding indeed phenomenal crops; but last year and this year, owing to a cold, wet summer and an early winter, the crops have fallen fully fifty per cent. below the standard fixed for them by preceding years. Whether this objectionable climate is normal or exceptional remains a problem to be solved; but, taking into consideration the fact that Edmonton is a very long way north, that it is in rather close proximity to the mountains, and that to the south, south-east and north-west of it there are extensive low-lying flats and muskegs, I am inclined to think that the climate here is very much worse than it was supposed to be a year or two ago. As it is at present located, Edmonton is almost unapproachable during the summer months, except by steamer, and as the steamers have only been making very few trips every season, the reader can imagine how thoroughly isolated its inhabitants are. Freight by steamer from Winnipeg to this point is about six cents a pound, by carts it is nine and ten cents per pound, and I fancy that with the excessively bad roads of the past season many of the freighters have more than earned their charges.

In travelling east from Edmonton along the broad tongue of land lying between Battle River and the North Saskatchewan the traveller gradually finds himself getting into a better region, and after fifty miles have been traversed he reaches a fine prairie country, moderately supplied with white poplar, cottonwood and grey willow, and having an exceedingly rich soil, not much damaged by sloughs and marahas. This sort of country, with some slight variations, continues all the way to Battleford, and taken all in all it would be difficult to find a better area of agricultural land of similar dimensions in any region that I have ever visited, be it in the North-West or elsewhere. What is said to be one of the finest settlements is now being established on Battle River, about 150 miles up that stream from Battleford. I was unable to visit the spot, but from what I have heard I am inclined to think it is this point that is fast finding favour in the eyes of settlers. Indeed, from all I can learn, I am led to believe that Battle River, for the last 200 miles of its course, drains a magnificent section of choice agricultural land.

This brings my *resumé* of the whole journey back to the point where the country traversed on the westward journey is reached, and though my homeward course was not identical with that taken by His Excellency when travelling in the opposite direction, the trails were not far enough apart to make any very notable difference in the character of the country.

The climate of the North-West has long been the subject of much discussion; and with all due respect to those whose views of it differ very widely from my own, I cannot help thinking that some very absurd and misleading falsehoods have been published in this connection. I have heard people say that one would not suffer any more with the cold in Winnipeg when the mercury stood at forty-five degrees below zero than he would in Ontario with the mercury at zero. Now I know from experience that this is about as silly nonsense as anyone ever listened to. In different portions of Ontario and Quebec I have on several occasions experienced temperatures ranging from

thirty to forty degrees below zero, and I am bound to say that on my homeward journey from Edmonton I found corresponding temperature in the North-West Territory, Manitoba and Winnipeg just as disagreeable as I ever considered them in Ontario or Québec. In Winnipeg, especially in the beginning of December, with the temperature less than thirty below zero, I not only found the cold remarkably penetrating, but the atmosphere out of doors almost unbreathable. Though in comparatively good health and never having had anything like trouble with my lungs, I was invariably seized with a violent fit of coughing whenever I stepped out of doors, and indeed so irritated did my throat become that it did not quite recover till some days after my return to Ontario. From remarks that I heard made about Winnipeg and Manitoba, I had always supposed, previous to visiting that region, that it would be a capital place for people suffering from affections of the throat and lungs. I have heard lecturers say that Manitoba had an "atmosphere of crystal," and that though the temperature was often low the air was so pure and dry that it would not injure the most delicate of respiratory organs. I have no hesitation in characterizing this as arrant trash. No one has more confidence in the grand future in store for the North-West than I have, but that is no reason why I should tell mischievous falsehoods about it. Though I do not pretend to any extraordinary knowledge of hygiene, I have no hesitation in saying that it would be almost suicidal for a consumptive to visit Winnipeg in winter. Owing to the extensive stretches of aguiah marshes that are in close proximity to the city, a short residence there in the summer might prove a beneficial, or at all events a harmless, change of air for an invalid, but from any other point of view this Canadian "Chicago" (in smells as well as in business activity) would cut but a sorry figure as a resort for invalids. Calgary, nestling as it does in the very shadow of the Rocky Mountains, has proved itself an excellent place for people having lungs that were weak or ailing. Indeed Dr. Sewell, who accompanied Lord Lorne, was very much impressed with the climatic advantages afforded by Calgary, McLeod, and other points in close proximity to the mountains; but the reader must remember that a belt of country about 1,000 miles or more wide intervenes between Calgary and Winnipeg.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

HOW TO VISIT THE NORTH-WEST—INFORMATION FOR INTENDING SETTLERS.

Before closing this *resumé*, I may be excused for offering a few suggestions to those who desire to see the most important points in the North-West, with as small an expenditure of time, money, and physical discomfort as possible. If one desires to make only a brief excursion, covering perhaps, only five or six weeks from the date of leaving Ontario, of course he will go by way of Winnipeg; but in doing so, he will do well to outfit completely in Ontario, and when he has done with his outfit sell it. For example, should he desire to visit Qu'Appelle, Touchwood Hills, and Prince Albert, he should provide himself with two or four large mares, sound and active, a light lumber waggon (with cover), and a set of good work harness. When he reaches the end of his journey (Prince Albert) his mares will sell for a handsome advance on what they cost him, and if he has taken good care of his waggon and harness (and can satisfy intending purchasers that he did not buy them in Winnipeg) he will lose but little on them. He is then on the bank of the North Saskatchewan, and can take passage to Selkirk by steamer, and thence home by rail. If, however, the traveller desires to see the whole Territory, or at all events to cross the prairie lying between the base of the Rocky Mountains and Red River, he should ship a good pair of Canadian horses and a light waggon (in bond) from Sarnia to Bismarck by rail, and thence by steamer up the Missouri to Fort Benton, whence he will drive to Fort McLeod overland. Once at Fort McLeod he is sure of a good price for his team of Canadian horses, especially if they are large and stylish; and having sold them he can buy excellent ponies at very moderate prices. In fact it is almost impossible to pick up good ponies about Winnipeg, or anywhere between there and Qu'Appelle, at any price, and the prices asked for such as they are range during the summer months from \$75 to \$100; while at McLeod, Calgary, or Blackfoot Crossing, vastly better ponies are always to be had, at from \$30 to \$45. Regarding the difference in the character of the ponies, I would have no hesitation in saying that the kyuses to be purchased in the West would be cheaper at \$100 than the average Red River ponies would be at \$45. Regarding the waggon to be used, I should have some little doubts as to what should be recommended. Hitherto the buckboard has been more popular than any other style of light waggon, but there are serious objections to it. It is rather low for fording streams, and where the bolster rests on the bed of the axle, it gives an ugly and constant jar to one's feet, that becomes very unpleasant. Besides this, the want of elasticity makes a buckboard more apt to break and wear itself out (especially on a new trail), and in addition to all this, a buckboard that has any spring

at all in the bars, is so long in the gearing that it is sure to draw heavily. On the other hand, the buckboard combines strength and lightness to a remarkable extent, and as the centre of gravity is very low, it is almost impossible to upset it. I will now endeavour to describe as nearly as I can the sort of waggon that I think most suitable for a trip through the North-West. The forward wheels should be as large as the hind wheels of an ordinary buggy, and the hind wheels only a trifle larger. The felloes should be shallow, but very wide, and covered with a steel tire three inches in width. The kingbolt should be fully double the strength of an ordinary one, and the axles and arms should be extra strong. Instead of a circle for the forward gearing, it should be provided with hounds such as are used in common lumber waggons. The reach should be short, and to counterbalance this, the box should be made deep enough to afford space for stowage. Thorough brace springs would, I think, be better than any others for this purpose; some modification of the long elliptical end spring might be made to answer the purpose. The boxes and arms should be of the best quality and finish, and they should have plenty of play. The wheels should be rather more "dished" than ordinary ones, so that they will not turn wrong-side out, nor spring at the spoke shoulders when the waggon lurches from side to side, as it is apt to do very violently when the trail is honeycombed by badger holes. An efficient brake is almost indispensable.

The harness should be strong, made with large well-padded hames, collars, and breeching, with no back-bands, or "saddles" as they are sometimes called.

There should not be less than four ponies for one waggon; the traveller will find it to his advantage to take with him as large a herd as practicable, as the more frequently he changes, the longer his animals will last. Should he start, for example, with twelve ponies, each pair will run light for four hitches for every one that they work, and this will allow him two saddle ponies with which to do his herding. Worked in this way his ponies would gain in flesh in crossing the prairies, and he would have no occasion to carry grain of any kind. His ponies would at the end of August, at any post about the eastern portion of the plains or at the end of the track, bring considerably more per head than they cost him, and the profit on the herd would go a long way towards covering the other expenses of the journey. At that time he would meet with many travellers about to take short trips on the plains, and the few ponies to be had thereabouts would in all probability be out on surveys.

As regards other portions of the outfit, of course much would depend upon the size of the party and the rate at which they desired to travel. The ordinary square-end, high-walled tents of the American pattern are but poor affairs on the prairie, though they are very useful and comfortable for camping in the timber. If the party is a large one, a bell tent will be found convenient, or, what is still better, a buffalo hide teepee (which can be bought at Fort Benton for some \$35 or \$40). In the teepee no stove is necessary, and the ventilation is good. A fire can be built in the centre, and the smoke escapes

at the apex of the cone. In order to be comfortable in a tent it is necessary to have a stove. For a small party, say three men, an A tent, with round ends, is the best adapted for prairie service. The walls should be very low and the ends well rounded, or else the first gale will tumble it down over the heads of the occupants. If a teepee is not used no traveller should attempt to take a long trip either in winter or summer without a small camp stove. These stoves are made of sheet iron, and with the necessary lengths of pipe they weigh but very little, and the extra weight is more than made up, so far as the question of transport is concerned, in the saving of fuel when the traveller is crossing those portions of the plains, where it is necessary to pack wood. And then there are often heavy rainfalls followed by cool nights, and nothing is more conducive to one's comfort than a stove in the tent under such circumstances. Of course I need not here mention the indispensables of every camping outfit, such as a liberal supply of bedding, waterproof sheets, waggon covers, or tarpaulins with which to protect the loads in the waggons from rainfalls or heavy dews.

Whether a man is fond of shooting or not he should at least carry a shot gun with him in travelling over the prairies. Small game is so abundant that a very ordinary sportsman can materially lessen the quantity of rations necessary to carry with him by daily supplementing his supplies from the thousands of ducks and prairie chicken with which he is sure to meet almost every day. In addition to a gun the traveller will find it desirable to have a good retriever dog with him, as two-thirds of the ducks he shoots are sure to fall in the water or marsh grass, where it is difficult to reach them. Occasionally the traveller will have an opportunity of killing an antelope without leaving the trail, but unless he is disposed to spend a little time in hunting he will hardly find it worth his while to carry a rifle.

CONCLUSION.

And now, after having spent some five months in travelling through, thinking of, and writing about, the North-west, it is with some hesitation that I say good-bye to a subject of such all-absorbing importance, and one with which the future history of the Dominion is so inseparably interwoven. In reflecting on the immense possibilities created by the opening up of such a vast area of fertile soil, I cannot but feel that, after all, my journal of the past five months has only dealt with a series of important issues in the most superficial manner. The future of the North-West means not merely a matter of dollars and cents, it means not merely a matter of national greatness for the British Empire ever united, or for independent Canada, or for Canada as a mighty annex to the great Republic. It means something far above and beyond all this. It means the peopling of that vast fertile valley, that is bounded by the sullen sterile ridges of the Laurentides on the east, and the glorious glittering snow-clad peaks of the Rocky Mountains on the west, with the toiling millions of the over-crowded countries of the Old World. It means hundreds of miles of nodding golden grain and green pastures with countless herds of cattle, where now the winds go piping over limitless

stretches of waving, withering prairie grass. It means cheerful, happy homes upon hill-sides that are now only pressed by the stealthy tread of the prowling wolf. It means the hallowed music of the church bell, where now only the wild, weird wail of the cayote breaks the stillness. It means relief for the thousands of ill-paid workers who are jostling each other in the fierce struggle for a bare existence in over-supplied trades. It means the teaching of labour to hold up its head and claim its own, not through legalized confiscation, not through helping the idle, the dissolute, and the improvident to despoil the sober, the industrious, and the thrifty ; not through license, anarchy, and bloodshed, not through conspiracy and assassination—but by offering a living, —nay a home and a generous competence, to all who will work.

